

Discover America

Newsletter of the American Discovery Trail Society

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ADT Legislation Reintroduced

On the first day that the 107th Congress was in session, January 3, 2001, Congressman Doug Bereuter of Nebraska reintroduced the National Discovery Trails Act, which would create a new category of long-distance trail under the National Trails System and designate the American Discovery Trail as the first of these trails.

As of June 12, 36 representatives had signed on as cosponsors of the bill, H.R. 36. The bill needs only to be "marked up" by the House Resources Committee and then sent to the House for a vote. As of press time, H.R. 36 had not been scheduled for such action.

On March 8, Senator Frank Murkowski reintroduced companion legislation in the Senate. The bill, S. 498, was passed by the Energy and Natural Resources Committee on May 16, and is expected to be voted on by the full Senate in June.

Members and friends of the American Discovery Trail can be a big influence in getting the House bill moving. Contact your representative and request that he or she become a cosponsor of the bill. A letter to Congressman Joel Hefley of Colorado, chair of the National Parks, Recreation & Public Lands subcommittee and to Congressman Jim Hansen of Utah, chair of the Resources Committee (Washington, DC 20515) urging them to pass H.R. 36, would be most helpful. If you need guidance in doing this, contact Reese Lukei Jr., ADT National Coordinator, at Rlukei@aol.com.

ADT in the News

Recent news stories about the American Discovery Trail include a feature in *Delta Sky* magazine about national coordinator Reese Lukei's efforts, a piece in *Midwest Living*, and a tip from National Public Radio's Savvy Traveler about the ADT as a likely spot for adventure.

Jack Potratz Documents the ADT Route through California

By Harry Cyphers

Every organization has its dedicated achievers. We would like to focus on one such individual who has been instrumental in making our website a treasure trove of information about the trail.

Jack Potratz is a retired industrial engineer with a love and appreciation for many of the things that make the ADT what it is, a pathway to "God's beautiful creation" as Jack puts it.

Jack loves to get away from it all and immerse himself in his natural surroundings. It is no accident that he lives in one of the country's most scenic areas, the Sacramento area of northern California. Jack heard about the American Discovery Trail and its goals from an article in the American Hiking Society's magazine about the running achievements of the California ADT State Coordinator, John Fazel. John has run every segment of the ADT in California, all 380 miles of it.

After talking with John Fazel and learning more about the newly formed ADT Society, Jack decided to join. At the time, 1996, each state coordinator, working with local grassroots organizations, had compiled a map of the planned ADT route across the U.S. These maps were of necessity not detailed enough in all areas to permit hikers to follow the exact route.

Jack, working under Fazel's guidance, compiled a series of 88 one-day round-trip hikes of about 8 miles in length. These hikes were designed to acquaint day hikers with the potential of the ADT and the beauty of their surroundings. When the Society began an effort to document the ADT from coast to coast Jack's day hikes formed the basis for a detailed trail description of the entire California route.

Jack's engineering background is readily apparent from reading his step-by-step trail descriptions. Each step of the way was meticulously and impeccably hand written in the exact format requested by the Society. Once the drafts were typed they were returned to Jack for review. He would write or call, at his own expense, with any corrections. During this process he kept in close contact with John Fazel to insure that he was documenting the correct route.

Jack personally checked and measured the entire route. He would not submit it to the Society until he was satisfied that it was correct both in the accuracy of the description and that it represented the correct route. The route was particularly difficult to describe in several areas because there are many alternative trails, some not clearly marked, that one could mistakenly take while trying to stay on the ADT through-route.

Jack had just turned 70 when he began this effort. As any good hiker should, Jack sought a companion for his trips. He was fortunate in having a grandson of college age who could make himself available from time to time. Jack induced his grandson to accompany him on many hikes. Jack was grateful for the opportunity to get to know his grandson better and enjoyed many long talks with him.

Only at the completion of the last segment was he starting to use the Internet to see the results of his work. Incidentally, the grandson is teaching Jack how to use the computer and how to access the ADT website. What a way to recruit members!

Jack is 76 now and is pleased to see his efforts portrayed on the website. He is already thinking about how he can improve the trail descriptions.

Harry Cyphers, the ADT Maryland State Coordinator, chairs the board of directors' website committee.

SPOTLIGHT ON COLORADO

Maps will be Available Soon in Retail Sporting Goods Stores

After several months of work, Colorado state coordinator Dick Bratton and other volunteers completed the overlay of the entire ADT route through Colorado on TOPO! seamless USGS quads. The overlay is on a set of seven TOPO CDs.

Wildflower Productions is now in the process of making the overlays available for sale to the public. Soon trail users will be able to download maps of the ADT in Colorado at retail sporting goods stores.

Guide to Colorado Route Coming to ADT Website

State coordinator Dick Bratton and ADT Society board member Harv Hisgen have been busy for the past year completing a detailed turn-by-turn description of the ADT route through Colorado. The ADT webmaster is now in the process of getting it onto the website.

Soon, if you're wondering how to follow the trail through the Centennial State, you'll be able to point your browser to www.discoverytrail.org and click your way from Utah to Kansas and Nebraska.

First ADT Marathon Scheduled For Colorado in September

The first marathon to be run on the ADT will be held on September 3. The course begins in Palmer Lake and ends in Colorado Springs, generally following the former Santa Fe railroad right-of-way.

The event is being sponsored by the American Discovery Trail Marathon Organizing Committee, an affiliate of the Road Runners Club of America.

Information is available from www.adtmarathon.com or (719) 635-3833.

Ute Pass Trail Dedication

On June 9th a new off-road section of the American Discovery Trail was dedicated with a ribbon cutting by an El Paso County Commissioner. The trail connects the town of Green Mountain Falls with the Ute Pass Elementary School.

The new trail provides a safe off-road route for children to walk or ride to school and avoid a heavily traveled county road that has no shoulders. The soft trail surface facilitates use by hikers, joggers, mountain bikers, equestrians and cross-country skiers. Part of the trail uses an old railroad bed.

The trail was the idea of local resident Rudy Bauer who made it possible by donating land for a trails easement. Construction was a combined effort of the El Paso County Parks Department, El Paso County Transportation Department, and town of Green Mountain Falls. Colorado Lottery funds helped pay for the project.

Blue Ridge Center Grant Leads to Revamped Website

If you haven't made a visit to www.discoverytrail.org lately, it's time to get on-line to see the new look.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship (a Robert and Dee Leggett Foundation), the website had been completely redone in user-friendly fashion.

Now, in addition to a wealth of information on the organization and diaries of trail journeys, there are updated maps and point-by-point trail descriptions through various states.

With the route descriptions on-line, potential trail users will now have instant access for trip planning. Wondering where the trail goes through your area? Log on and check it out.

Coleman Continues its Support and Sponsors Birthday Contest

The ADT Society received another generous grant from The Coleman Company of \$12,000. Coleman has supported the trail every year since its original sponsorship of the ADT Scouting Expedition ten years ago.

As part of the company's 100-year birthday celebration, the company is asking consumers who have true tales in which Coleman products take part to submit short essays. The grand prize is a six-day vacation for four in the Grand Tetons plus \$2,000 worth of gear. Another 15 first-prize winners will receive \$1,000 gift certificates for Coleman gear.

The deadline for the 200-word essays is September 26. Details are available at www.coleman.com.

ADTS Receives Donations In Memory of Bill Foot

Last year Bill Foot, one of the ADT Society's true leaders and an inspiration to many, passed away. Bill and his wife Laurie traversed the ADT in 1997 and 1998 and then joined the ADT Society's board of directors.

The ADT Society expresses deep appreciation to the following people for their donations in his memory:

The Angerman Family
Juanita Barnes
Anita Bohl
Rex A. Carper
Bob & Elaine Carr
Ronald W. Cartwright
Chris & Carolyn Cios
Todd & Jan Davis
Ellen Dudley & Eric Seaborg
Sam & Carol Ann Fuller
Jack Gellerstedt
Timothy S. Holmen
Mr. & Mrs. John Kelly
Kimberly L. Kelly
Alvalyn Larson
Reese Lukei

William M. Mead
Gary M. Nero
Richard A. Niles, MD
Jeannie & Bill Richardson
Marie Shafer
Jody L. Sindelar
James W. & Marty B. Wright

A New Breed of Trail

Message from the President

The American Discovery Trail is a new breed of trail. It not only purposely connects people in cities and rural areas to the great outdoors, it also connects a multitude of trails to each other. The National Trails System Act of 1968 called for a network of trails throughout our country. Since then, the number of trails and hikers has burgeoned. But these trails have often existed as separate entities. The American Discovery Trail acts as a “spine” across the heart of America to join many of these trails together. By design, the ADT connects to five of the eight national scenic trails, 10 of the 13 national historic trails, two dozen of the more than 800 national recreational trails and dozens of local and regional trails.

One really can step onto the American Discovery Trail and begin a journey that explores the breadth, length, and history of our country. The National Trails System Act foresaw an integrated system of trails for this nation. The American Discovery Trail is a vital link in that chain and proof positive that the sum can really be greater than its parts.

Think of the possibilities. I live in Virginia, a state that the American Discovery Trail does not pass through. But I am working in my town to help develop a greenway trail that would lead to the Appalachian Trail 20 miles to the west. Once I hopped on that I could take it north to Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, where it meets the American Discovery Trail. From there I could go west on the ADT to see my sister near Chicago or a friend in San Francisco. I could turn north when I reached the North Country Trail and investigate the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Minnesota. I could turn south on the Continental Divide Trail and learn about early Native American settlements in New Mexico.

When my husband Bill and I traveled across the ADT in 1997 and 1998 we were introduced to trails and sections of the country we might never have experienced had the ADT not brought us there. The people we met, the scenery we viewed, and the culture and history we learned along the way enriched our lives. All this was magnified by the fact that we did it under our own power.

Now you can explore the American Discovery Trail both on the ground and virtually. Our website can be found at www.discoverytrail.org. It has recently been updated to include highlights of the trail in each state along with pictures, route descriptions, journals from hikers, links to affiliated trails, and updates on our progress with the legislation before Congress and other news. Please join us in spreading the word about this wonderful resource.

— *Laurel Ibbotson Foot, President*

ADT Society Affiliate: The River to River Trail Society

Southern Illinois’ River to River Trail Society promotes outdoor recreation through hiking, although our trail is used by mountain bikes and equestrians. Much of our work has been to publicize and service our trail community through information distribution, and providing maintenance, shuttle, or trail help. There are many ancillary activities such as working on the Shawnee National Forest Management Plan and encouraging the forest to be more recreation friendly.

Service to our trail constituency made us realize that we need a separate organization for hikers so we established the Illinois Hiking Society. We hope to offer a website soon that will help establish hiking clubs in every town, county, or school. This is our third spin-off organization, the others being the

American Indian Society of Southern Illinois and the Williams Hill Tower Committee.

We plan to revise our trail guide using GPS points. One of our proudest moments recently has been the grand opening of the ADT and completion of marking the trail from the Wabash River to Mississippi River, that is, from New Haven to St. Louis.

— Submitted by John O'Dell, Southern Illinois ADT coordinator and founder of the River to River Trail Society.

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*Making
Connections..
Coast to Coast*