



# Discover America

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## ADT Featured Trail: The Buckeye Trail

By Paul Daniel

The Buckeye Trail is unique among the nation's trails in that it is a long continuous loop within Ohio and was planned, constructed, and maintained largely by volunteer labor. The closest thing to ends are tags at the southwest corner overlooking the Ohio River in Cincinnati and in the northeast overlooking the beaches of Lake Erie.

The genesis of the trail was an article in the *Columbus Dispatch* in October 1958 by Merrill Gilfillan suggesting a trail connecting the Ohio River and Lake Erie somewhat similar to the famous Appalachian Trail. Several Ohioans agreed and by May 1959 the Buckeye Trail Association was formed with a 14-member executive committee including Gilfillan, Emma (Grandma) Gatewood, Bill Miller, Roy Fairfield, and Bob Paton, who became the trail's first volunteer executive director.

By 1969, 500 miles of trail had been

marked with 2" by 6" blue blazes between the Ohio River and Lake Erie. Plans were announced to build additional trail along the old Miami Erie Canal towpath and connect to existing trail. The final blaze was painted in 1981 completing a full loop of the entire state as well as the "little loop" in the highly populated northeastern part of the state.

During this time, the North Country National Scenic Trail, which traverses New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Dakota, was invited to use the Buckeye Trail for part of its crossing of Ohio.

An excellent guidebook, *Follow the Blue*

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## Living Along the Trail

By Connie Snyder

The post office in Londonderry, Ohio, is situated on the Buckeye Trail, which shares 240 of its miles with the ADT. When I began working as a clerk in this office many years ago, I became accustomed to hikers mailing packages to themselves in care of General Delivery. These packages contained clean clothes, food, and other supplies needed along the trail. My earliest recollection of a hiker was a wiry little fellow who retrieved his package and then sat down on the front step and changed his clothes. He came in a few minutes later and mailed his dirty clothes home.

Early in the spring of 1997, I was making the most of a warm and sunny Saturday by baking, cleaning house, and entertaining our four grandchildren. As I was ready to serve lunch, the phone rang. A hiker at the post office was calling the contact number for the postmaster. The office had just closed and he was asking what time the rural carriers would return, hoping to collect his package of supplies. Since it would be over an hour, I told him I would drive the five miles to the office and deliver his package. By the time I exchanged names and pleasantries with Bill and Laurie Foot and delivered the package, we had become friends. The Foots had been on the trail all week in cold weather and flood conditions. Now they were hot, dirty, tired, and hungry, so I invited them home for lunch. They were glad to trade trail mix and dehydrated staples for country cooking.

The Foots readily accepted my offer for a quick shower and some clean clothes. Over lunch, my husband, Mike, and I got better acquainted with Bill and Laurie and we felt like old friends. By the time we got to dessert, we had invited our guests to spend the night with us and take a day off to rest.

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Ohio farmland, Buckeye Trail

## Living Along the Trail

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On Sunday I fixed a hearty breakfast while Bill used our computer to update their electronic journal. We gave our new friends a tour of our county, especially all the Hopewell Indian mound sites.

On Monday morning I loaded hikers, walking sticks, and heavy backpacks into my car and headed for the office. The Foots picked up the trail where they had left it, heading for California. We kept in touch with our new friends by phone and by accessing their journal entries on the Web. As we read of their interesting experiences and of common folks along the way who showed them kindnesses, we came to understand the meaning of "Trail Magic." This magic connected us to Bill and Laurie in a most rewarding way. We later visited them at their home in Lynchburg, Virginia. We grieved with Laurie when she lost Bill a few years later.

Mike and I felt special that we had crossed paths with folks who came to mean so much to us. What we failed to realize was that this was the first of many friends we would meet along the trail. The next year Bill and Laurie called to tell us that a young man was running the trail. They did not know him personally, but had given him our names when he contacted them. I alerted my rural carriers to be on the lookout for a hiker. Sure enough, Brian Stark stopped at the small grocery store owned by a carrier, loading up on junk food. The carrier looked at him and remarked, "Connie has been looking for you." The next afternoon Brian showed up at the office. I gave him a desk to work on his journal until time to close.

Brian was totally different from our fixed idea of hikers. He carried a 12-pound pack and existed primarily on chips, candy bars, and pop. We immediately began to fret over him. I was concerned that he did not eat properly and Mike was afraid he might injure himself running at such a pace through rough trail areas. We invited Brian to stay for several days, yet continue to hike. Mike worked for American Electric Power as a forester and his travels took him all along

the counties where the BT/ADT is located. He would drop Brian off on his way to work and pick him up at a predetermined site in the evening. I packed him nutritious lunches and fed him well in the morning and evening. We hooked him up with family members and other postmasters all the way to Cincinnati. And again, we made a new friend with this delightful young man.

Englishman John Merrill was our next guest. He walked casually into the Post Office to buy stamps and stayed with us several days. I had to leave for a business meeting out of town, so Mike and John were on their own. They used the same plan of drop-offs and pickups that we used



*Connie and Mike Snyder*

with Brian. John is an interesting study of his own. He has hiked extensively all over the world and has written many small books describing his hikes. He has sent us some of his publications and of course our favorite is *A Walk in Ohio, 1310 Miles Following the Buckeye Trail*.

Peter and Joyce Cottrell touched our hearts in many ways. These tiny little people with such heavy packs and high hopes also became dear friends. If you want to see an example of true grit and Yankee determination, get acquainted with Pete and Joyce. They would slack pack and give us a call when they were ready to call it a day. We keep in touch with these folks and have enjoyed having them visit us again on a driving trip through our area.

Another New Englander, Holley Cooney, phoned me at the post office. She was riding a mountain bike on the ADT or as close as she could come to it. We appreciated the quiet strength of this fine, strong woman. She had never really biked, but decided she wanted to do this on her own. Holley's immediate concern was where to rent a car so she could drive to a wedding in Maryland the next weekend. Mike's mother and brother lived in Greenbelt, Maryland, and we were due for a visit. We took Holley, dropping her off at the Metro station near our destination. We exchanged phone numbers and picked up Holley at the same station a few days later for our trip home. Once again, things just magically worked out great for all of us.

A few years ago we became trail maintainers for two sections of the BT. Whenever we can, we filter trail information to the local paper, *The Chillicothe Gazette*. As a result, most folks around our village of Richmond Dale know about the trail and our regular visitors. One of our local churches customarily sponsors a luncheon on election day since the polling place is across the street. Last fall, Mike and I planned to meet at the church for lunch. A local township employee saw Mike in front of the church and told him hikers were coming down the street. He waited outside and met Amy and Brent Anslinger. We had read about their BT circuit hike in our local paper. They are a lovely young couple, geared to outdoor education as a profession. Brent whipped out his camcorder and filmed the church and all of us eating lunch and especially the dessert table. They spent two nights and were able to put in an extra long day and make up some lost time.

When we entertain guests from the trail, we usually include them in our regular activities. We are involved in two western square dance clubs. We drag our guests along so they can share our fun and so our dance friends are more aware of the trail. One caller works for another local paper, which has led to more articles and pictures of the hikers.

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## The Buckeye Trail

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*Blazes: A Guide to Hiking Ohio's Buckeye Trail* by Robert J. Pond, was published in 2003 by the Ohio University Press (Athens, Ohio 45701). This 300-page paperback is profusely illustrated and contains maps of several featured hikes at a variety of trail locations.

The Buckeye Trail is over 1200 miles in length and crosses all of Ohio's physiographic provinces. This includes till plains, lake plains, glaciated and unglaciated Allegheny plateaus, and the bluegrass of southern Ohio.

When the American Discovery Trail was seeking a route across Ohio between Indiana and West Virginia, the Buckeye Trail presented a natural choice and currently about two thirds of the ADT in Ohio is on the Buckeye Trail in southern Ohio.

The Buckeye Trail goes through local, county, and state parks and forests wherever possible and utilizes the Cuyahoga Valley Recreation Area and the Wayne National Forest. It crosses some private land with landowner permission. Where off-road trail is not possible, the least traveled roadways are used.

The BT is divided into 24 sections, each between 40 and 60 miles in length. Pocket-sized detailed maps on waterproof



*Hocking Hills State Park, Ohio*

paper are available for each section showing the trail route and nearby roads and landmarks such as campsites and historic sites. Point-by-point directions are on each map with mileage in both directions.

The volunteer nature of the trail continues with its control vested in the Buckeye Trail Association, which is a network of trail maintainers and trail builders who are constantly looking for opportunities to take the trail off the road wherever possible. The Buckeye Trail has good cooperation with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources

but depends on its members for support. Family membership is open to all at \$20 per year and includes four issues of the *Trailblazer* to keep membership apprised of activity along the trail.

Memberships are available from the Buckeye Trail Association, P.O. Box 254, Worthington, OH 43085. The Buckeye Trail is on the Internet at [www.buckeyetrail.org](http://www.buckeyetrail.org).

*Paul Daniel is the ADT State Coordinator for Ohio and a longtime active member of the Buckeye Trail Association.*

## New ADT Bridge

*By Chuck Oestreich*

In the heart of America, between Iowa and northern Illinois lies a formidable barrier to the ADT – the Mississippi River. But a bridge adaptation is about to change all that. Walkers and cyclists will soon be able to access river trails on both sides of the river through ramps leading from bridges across the historic Rock Island Arsenal. Moreover, a new 10-foot wide dedicated bike and pedestrian bridge over an adjacent arm of the river will be constructed, and the land trail—now a sidewalk—over the tip of this island will be widened.

This ADT Connection, as planners have called it, will connect the ADT as it travels from Muscatine to Davenport, Iowa, with the Great River Trail in Rock Island,

Moline, and East Moline in Illinois. Users will be able to enjoy a non-trafficked, nature-filled crossing of Ol' Man River, and also for part of the trip use a more than 100-year-old classic swing bridge still in daily operation.

Being built now through funding from a combination of federal, state, and county governments as well as a local nonprofit group called River Action, the ADT Connection will soon break the Mississippi River barrier, and be happily bearing walkers and bikers across the Father of Waters.

*Chuck Oestreich is the ADT Coordinator for Northern Illinois.*

## Living Along the Trail

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You might be wondering how all these experiences have affected our lives. Let me say first that they have been very satisfying and fulfilling for both of us. Mike was in scouting for 35 years and I grew up in the country with wooded hills as a playground. We both love people and nature and are aware of the environmental changes going on in this country. We were both raised by mothers who taught us to be kind and hospitable. We are just average people with an ordinary home and lifestyle. We count our friends as our greatest treasures, including those we meet on the trail.

*Making Connections...*

*Coast to Coast*

American Discovery Trail Society

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## **Mapping Project Continues**

### **Part two of two articles**

*By Harry Cyphers*

*The Winter 2003 issue of **Discover America** discussed how the ADTS is working to digitize and document the entire route of the ADT. This article describes how we plan to make this information easily and economically available to the public.*

#### **Map Availability**

The basic mapping tool being used for this project is the National Geographic Seamless USGS Topographic State Series map software currently available on compact discs (CD-ROM). These are available with a maximum resolution of 1:24,000. Also available is a 1:100,000 scale series for the entire country. View the National Geographic Maps website [www.nationalgeographic.com/topo](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/topo) for more information on this mapping software.

The ADT trace and associated text discussed in the Winter 2003 issue will be available from several sources for use with these maps.

#### **Online Access**

Initially two websites will offer downloadable files containing the ADT route trace for use with the National Geographic State Series of TOPO maps and GPS receivers. The State Series with a scale 1:24,000 currently sells for \$99.95 per state. A new 1:100,000 scale series of the entire country, adequate for most areas, is also now

available. Certain areas may require the State Series to show enough detail for trail navigation.

The National Geographic MapXchange website at <http://maps.nationalgeographic.com/topo/search.cfm> will offer selected ADT trail segments, at no cost, to introduce the traveler to the system and for local trips on the trail. The same capability will exist on the ADT website at [www.discoverytrail.org](http://www.discoverytrail.org).

#### **Hard Copy Maps**

For more casual trail users who want only hard copies of particular map(s) the ADTS will engage a third-party company to distribute custom maps in different sizes and scales directly to the customer for as low as \$8.95.

If a user does not have access to the Internet, the ADTS merchandise office will soon accept phone orders for maps and have them sent directly to the customer.

#### **Compact Discs**

If users would like a larger region or the entire trail, a compact disc containing that portion of the trail trace will be available for use with the above maps.

In the near future we will also make available a custom CD-based product that will provide all of the ADT maps in a single set. This will be available from National Geographic Maps, a third-party vendor, or the ADTS under a licensing agreement with National Geographic Maps.

#### **Local Access**

To complement the download of trail segments via the MapXchange and ADTS websites mentioned above, customers will soon be able to purchase maps with the ADT overlay from Map-on-Demand (MOD) kiosks. These kiosks are now appearing in recreational stores across the country.

#### **Helping financial self-sustainability**

The ADTS is a member-run, not-for-profit organization. As such, it is solely dependent on membership fees, donations, grants, and modest merchandise sales for financial support and most significantly, volunteer effort from its members.

Over the past decade, the organization has developed a product that is increasingly popular with the recreation community, namely, a well-documented multi-purpose national recreational trail that is within hiking and biking distance of 30 million people.

It is envisioned that the ability to provide this community the means, at a reasonable price, to access and appreciate this national asset will also enable the Society to attain a degree of financial self-sufficiency. In turn, this income will allow us to better maintain the trail itself as well as expand our ability to introduce the ADT to many more Americans.

*Harry Cyphers is ADT State Coordinator for Maryland/Washington, D.C., and chair of the website committee.*