



Discover America

Newsletter of the American Discovery Trail Society

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ADT Featured Trail: MoPac & MoPac East Trails



Along the MoPac East Trail

Photo courtesy of Mike Mascoe

One of the goals of the American Discovery Trail is to connect trails to where people live. This helps to provide access to the outdoors and encourages physical recreation and non-motorized transportation.

The MoPac and MoPac East Recreational Trails in southeast Nebraska are prime examples of this kind of urban/countryside trail system. The MoPac East is a 25-mile trail that stretches from the city of Lincoln through the small communities of Walton, Eagle, Elmwood, and Wabash. It connects to the MoPac Trail in Lincoln near 84th Street, where it links into a 60-mile city trail network. This provides easy access for residents to explore some of the area's finest wildlife habitat in the rural landscape while simultaneously providing alternative transportation to jobs, shopping, and the services a city can provide.

The MoPac East Trail is a mix of hometown, woodland, and agricultural scenery. Its crushed limestone surface ends in Wabash where the final two miles are maintained as a nature only trail. Its views alternate between a wooded canopy providing shade and wind protection and open vistas of farms and fields. Within the corridor and paralleling the limestone trail is the separate, natural-surfaced Charles L. Warner Equestrian Trail.

These trails offer year-round recreation for hikers, joggers, bicyclists, horseback riders, cross-country skiers, and wildlife watchers. They are owned and maintained by the Lower Platte South Natural Resource District and also serve as environmental education and public awareness tools. Eventually the trail will reach the Platte River Connection and Lied Platte

River Bridge at South Bend, with future connections to the Omaha trail network.

While the MoPac East Trail is currently the longest developed rail-trail in Nebraska, the MoPac Trail is Lincoln's longest trail, traveling through most of the city. This concrete trail connects to the University of Nebraska, community neighborhoods, and local businesses. It provides a non-motorized alternative for commuting, exercise, and recreation where people can meet their neighbors and avoid unsafe traffic.

Both trails lie along the former Missouri Pacific Railroad corridor. The rail line was active until 1984 when heavy rains destroyed a portion of the track. A group of local citizens helped this trail become a reality.

The Nebraska Trails Foundation and the Great Plains Trail Network (GPTN) raised the funds from individuals and corporate donors to purchase the property and deeded it over to the Lower Platte South NRD in 1991. GPTN members also worked to gain passage of a \$5.3 million bond issue for trails that passed with over 76% of the vote. The

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It's twice as much fun to enjoy a trail with a friend.

Photo courtesy of Mike Mascoe

Recent Long-Distance ADT Travelers

Completed Treks in 2005

Traveler	Started	Mode	Heading	ADT Miles	Last Location
Ken Powers & Marcia Powers	Feb 05	Backpack	W	4,888	California - Point Reyes
Matt Parker	May 03	Horseback	E	3,764	Delaware - Cape Henlopen
Linda Losey	Mar 05	Horseback	E	2,600	Maryland - Lisbon

Still on the Trail

John Fazel	1991	Run/Hike/Bike	W	3,429	Colorado - Grand Junction
Judy Martel	2001	Recumbent Bike	W	1,736	Missouri - St. Louis
Suzanne Falksen	2002	Mountain Bike	W	1,461	Utah - Beef Basin
Jim Shaner	Oct 02	Walking	W	613	Ohio - Belpre
Debbie Shachner	May 05	Hike/Snowshoe	E	1,020	Utah - Boulder
Robin Grapa & Patti Laatsch	Feb 06	Backpack	W	500+	Somewhere in Ohio
Sheri & Randy Propster	March 06	Backpack	W	250+	Somewhere in Maryland

These are some of the long-distance travelers who have been in touch with the ADT Society. The list shows the variety of modes of travel on the ADT. Many are doing the trail in one thru-trip, but more are taking a segment at a time in a multi-year adventure.

West-Bound Hikers Raise Marrow Disease Funds

Robin Grapa, a 26-year-old survivor of bone marrow disease, and her mother, Patty Laatsch, are backpacking across the nation on the American Discovery Trail to raise awareness and money for bone marrow disease research. They estimate the 5,000-mile backpacking adventure will take about eight months.

Grapa and Laatsch started their hike on Feb. 4 from the Atlantic coast at Cape Henlopen, Del., and so far have logged more than 500 miles, averaging about 18 miles a day.

Grapa was diagnosed with aplastic anemia at age 19 and nearly died in treatment. After receiving last rites, she lived to recover. Two years ago she was told by her physician that her disease was in complete remission. "I really did get a new chance at life and so I thought I should do something

with that," Grapa said.

The hike is a way to celebrate her good health and give back to the Aplastic Anemia & MDS International Foundation which helped her during her treatment. "Maybe if I give back to the foundation ... more lives can be saved, and maybe others can be inspired to live their dreams, too," Grapa said. "In the coming months we will be telling our story to anyone who will listen."

The ADT was selected to facilitate their mission since it goes through many towns and major cities, including Washington, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Kansas City, Denver, and San Francisco.

Grapa's hike has already made the news. She was featured in *Roll Call*, the congressional newspaper, as they hiked through Washington, D.C., as well as in other newspaper articles and radio interviews. It seems everywhere ADT hikers go they meet people wanting to hear more about this trail, this country, and their hikes.

Grapa's daily journal can be found at www.ourhike.com or www.discoverytrail.org.



Robin Grapa and Patty Laatsch
Photo courtesy of Grapa & Laatsch

Trail News

Indiana

An ADT-affiliated trail, the Cardinal Greenway Trail in Muncie, Ind., has made the news. The (Muncie) *Star Press* reported on Jan. 22 that the Cardinal Greenway received nearly \$1 million dollars in federal transportation funds to build another section of trail. The extension will add 7.7 miles from the Prairie Creek Reservoir to the community of Losantville, for a total of 39 miles of paved trail once the project is completed.

Although numerous other communities were in competition for the funding, Steve Morris, chief of the streams and trails section in the division of outdoor recreation at the Indiana Department of Natural Resources felt the Cardinal

Greenway was successful because of “demonstrating strong community support, coming up with matching funds, showing how these projects are going to serve the greater community, and making all the connections we feel are important—connecting schools and parks and other destinations within the community.”

Maryland

American Discovery Trail board member and Maryland state coordinator Harry David Cyphers was recently featured in an article in the *Bowie Blade News* (12/15/05) for his years of volunteer service to the ADT. Cyphers began mountain and road biking about 20 years ago. With his involvement in the local trail commu-

nity, his love of exploring, and his background as a retired NASA engineer, he was a perfect fit for helping the ADT Society to find the optimum east to west route through Maryland that would be scenic, safe, and accessible.

Although Cyphers continues to monitor the trail for necessary changes and makes sure it is well-marked for travelers, his recent efforts have broadened to include helping to design and build the ADT website and develop maps for trail users.

Recently National Geographic coordinated with the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey to create maps that are suitable for hikers, bikers and park visitors. Cyphers and others then began working with National Geographic to add overlays and tracings to their maps with trails and streets for ADT users. Eventually this labor-intensive effort will result in affordable maps of sufficient detail for navigation.

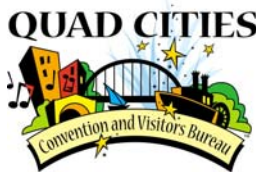
Ohio

The Oxford, Ohio, State-to-State Half-Marathon was another huge success this year. With more than 800 finishers in various events, the organizers were able to donate \$5,000 to the ADT Society and a similar amount to local trail coffers. The ADTS supplied keychain carabiners for the registration packets and event tents supplied by our corporate sponsor, The Coleman Company. For more information and photos from the race, check out www.statetostate.org. This year's race will be held Sept. 17.

Colorado

ADT Society Vice President Harv Hisgen was the recipient of the Happi Feet Award in 2005. He earned the award for his significant work on the mapping and trail description project for the ADT. Although Hisgen was officially announced as the recipient of the award at the September 2005 ADTS board meeting, it was not immediately publicized because he was unable to attend the meeting. It was later given to him at a surprise party in his home state.

Save the Date! 18th National Trails Symposium October 19 – 22, 2006



The American Discovery Trail Society's annual membership and board of directors meeting will be held in conjunction with the National Trails Symposium right on the ADT in Davenport/Bettendorf, Iowa, and Rock Island/Moline, Illinois.

The Quad Cities will host the 18th National Trails Symposium Oct. 19–22 at the RiverCenter in downtown Davenport. The symposium provides an opportunity for greenways and trail advocates, managers, planners, users, and outdoor product providers, as well as conservationists, private landowners, and tourism and business interests to come together to communicate and participate in an educational conference.

The National Trails Symposium is held every other year and is sponsored by American Trails, a national, nonprofit organization working on behalf of all trail interests, whose members want to create and protect America's network of trails.

The symposium will feature educational sessions, mobile workshops, exhibits, recreational opportunities and more. Outings will showcase many of the best trails and natural lands in the region and provide examples of how trails and greenways are an integral part of economic development. The theme for the symposium is “Trails for America: Every Where, Every Way, Every Day”.

For information visit the American Trails website at www.americantrails.org.

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?

Here's my additional tax-deductible contribution of:

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Budget Cuts for Trails?

American Hiking Society's March 2006 *Paperless Trail* reports that President Bush released the administration's fiscal year 2007 (Oct. 2006—Sept. 2007) budget in February, kicking off the federal budget cycle. Sadly, several trail and recreation programs will be taking a big hit if Congress does not take steps to protect and preserve federal lands and beautiful, natural places.

Of note for hikers, the administration's proposed budget includes:

- **\$100 million cut** for the National Park Service (although it includes a \$24 million increase for park operations);
- **\$15 million cut** to Forest Service capital improvement and maintenance for trails and **\$14.3 million cut** to recreation, wilderness, and heritage programs;
- **\$5 million cut** from the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) National Landscape Conservation System operating budget, including over **\$2 million cut** from the 12 national historic and scenic trails the BLM manages;
- **\$1.4 million cut** to BLM recreation and wilderness management and cuts to the National Landscape Conservation System; and
- **\$30 million cut** for the federal side of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). This essential program funds land acquisition for parks, trails, forests, and other public lands. The proposed budget also proposes to terminate the state portion of the LWCF program, an important source of funding for close-to-home parks and recreation.

In addition, the administration proposes to raise \$800 million by **selling off national forest and other public lands**, a proposal American Hiking Society strongly opposes.

These much lower agency funding levels would adversely affect critical hiking trail and recreation needs throughout the country, exacerbating already huge trail maintenance backlogs, deteriorating infrastructure, insufficient staffing, and impacts to resources.

As the budget goes through Congress, American Hiking Society will be working to restore funding to these essential trail and hiking-related programs.



This lucky group of hikers caught a warm January day for their annual hike.

Photo courtesy of Pat Hayes

Happy Hikers

By Pat Hayes

Monday, Jan. 16, was a beautiful day at Hueston Woods State Park in southern Ohio. The skies were blue and temperatures ranged in the mid- 50s. Once again local hikers came to take part in the annual Martin Luther King Day hike around Acton Lake.

This 11-mile hike was started back in the 1980s by Dr. Paul Daniel, a now-retired professor of biology at Miami University and former resident of Oxford, Ohio. Paul was very active and involved with the American Discovery Trail Society and pioneered the trail through Hueston Woods State Park.

Before the hike, several people showed

up for breakfast at the park lodge to stoke up before the trek. About 30 people participated this year, some going only as far as the Nature Center, others making it all the way around the lake. Due to the unseasonably warm weather, several fishermen could be seen.

Usually we make this hike on frozen ground or through snow. This time we had to contend with mud on the horse and bike trail sections.

Mike Ball, an Oxford resident and long-time friend of Paul's, and I hiked and flagged the trail the Thursday before the official hike; another sunny and warm day. We couldn't believe it was January.

I want to thank Hueston Woods Park manager Lonnie Snow for allowing us to use the Acton Room for our lunch.

MoPac Trails

(Continued from page 1)

organization represents all trail users and has grown to more than 800 member families since its inception in 1988.

The American Discovery Trail Society supports local efforts to develop trail networks in areas along the ADT. The

symbiotic relationship between local citizens creating a trail system to meet their needs and the national recognition and clout of being part of a larger entity is beneficial to all.



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the supplies needed for the project to the site a half mile from the parking lot. The equipment included chain saws, shovels, mattocks, spud bars, picks, and wood for benches.

They cleared out an area large enough to accommodate 10 to 20 campers, no easy task because of the honeysuckle, roots, small trees and stumps that covered the ground. To build a fire ring, the group hauled rocks from the nearest creek. Finally, they installed two wooden benches around the fire ring.

Noah and the other scouts worked four Saturdays to build the campsite and totaled over 190 service hours on the project. Thanks to Noah and his troop's efforts an excellent addition for trail users is now available along the ADT.

Noah White stands in the campsite he developed for the ADT as his Eagle Scout project.
Photo courtesy of Luke White

A Good Night's Rest

Finding a spot to camp along the American Discovery Trail just got easier in southwest Ohio. Noah White is a member of Boy Scout Troop 935 in Shandon, Ohio, which is located about five miles from Governor Bebb Park near Cincinnati.

Since the troop enjoyed using this park for camping, outings, and orienteering, Noah decided that as his Eagle Scout pro-

ject he wanted to give something back to make the park better for other people to enjoy. He contacted park ranger Christina Simpson and she suggested that he clear off an area on the eastern side of the park for people hiking or biking the ADT to use as a campsite. A site was selected about 800 yards from the entrance off California Road in Okeana, Ohio.

Noah recruited his fellow scouts to carry

Making Connections...
Coast to Coast

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