



Discover America

Newsletter of the American Discovery Trail Society

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ADT Featured Trail

Historic Arkansas Riverwalk of Pueblo



Citizens and visitors alike turn out for boat rides and festivities at the Boats, Blues, and BBQ festival along the Historic Arkansas Riverwalk of Pueblo.

Question: When is a trail the cornerstone of a community? Answer: When it becomes the focal point for development, urban renewal, cultural events, education, and recreation. This is what the Historic Arkansas Riverwalk is doing for the City of Pueblo, Colo.

Conceived in 1995, the Historic Arkansas Riverwalk of Pueblo (HARP) follows the original Arkansas River stone wall, creating an historic setting that opens up to provide access to the downtown of the city. The centerpiece is a 32-acre urban, water-based park that provides pedestrian pathways for strolling and bike paths that lead you to beautiful Lake Pueblo, Colorado's most visited reservoir.

HARP's significance goes beyond its recreational component, however. It was also developed to revitalize a segment of the community that had become unusable

and unsightly. It provided an economic catalyst to the community through the development of commercial lots to encourage businesses and jobs after the area suffered from the collapse of the steel industry in the 1980s.

As a result, historic buildings were restored, a convention center was developed, and the Boettcher Outdoor Classroom and Amphitheater was constructed. Beautifully landscaped parks include several artistic sculptures and gardens as well as natural areas for wildlife viewing.

The Riverwalk includes plazas for family gatherings, festivals, and community events. An abundance of scheduled activities draws citizens and tourists. Pedal boat rentals and narrated excursion boat tours return each spring.

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Trails as Education

Part of the focus of the Historic Arkansas Riverwalk of Pueblo (HARP) is education. For this reason, the Boettcher Outdoor Classroom and Amphitheater was constructed in 2003 to encourage educational opportunities focusing on history, science, and art. It adjoins the Pike Plaza, which was named to commemorate Zebulon Pike's arrival in Colorado in 1806.

An example of how the riverwalk incorporates education and history with trails is the initiative that surrounded the bicentennial of Pike's Expedition in 2006. The HARP Foundation worked in cooperation with other communities along the Arkansas River where Pike camped in 1806-7.

In 2006, the HARP Foundation commis-

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A re-enactor portrays Zebulon M. Pike at the plaza named in his honor for the bicentennial of his arrival in Colorado.

Trail News

Northern Indiana

By Swati Gunale

The Cardinal Greenway has opened one more mile of trail in Marion, Ind., and is negotiating with trail neighbors to open two more miles. This total of three miles will go into the town of Sweetser. Also, Marion expanded its greenway trails by one additional mile.

The Cardinal Greenway sealed five miles of trail with a soy-based product instead of an oil-based one. The soy-based sealant has been found to be more environmentally friendly and costs \$5,000 per mile.

Northern Illinois

By Chuck Oestreich

River Action, a Mississippi River advocacy group, placed a large number of markers/trail signs in western Illinois where the ADT parallels the Mississippi River. More will be added this coming year. Thanks to River Action for making it a little easier for us to find our way.

A grand opening of an enlarged trailway across the tip of Arsenal Island between Rock Island, Ill., and Davenport, Iowa, was held in October.

A new Alliance Trail between Peru, Ind., and Bureau, Ill., is on track for preliminary funding. With the completion of this trail, northern Ill. would have a continuous trail across its width.

Southern Illinois

By John O'Dell

The Shawnee National Forest changed the configuration of the River to River Trail in Lusk Creek Canyon necessitating the re-marking of the trail three times in a two month period. The River to River Trail Society members have been busy attending meetings and contacting the media and their congressmen to explain the issues.

Colorado

By Dick Bratton

The ADT state committee spent considerable time updating the turn-by-turn route description for Colorado incorporating new

GPS data and input from recent hikers.

A project to construct three miles of new trail in the northeastern Colorado ADT segment was approved. The \$1.2-million project will get the ADT off some very busy roads east of the city of Brighton. Funding comes from state lottery proceeds.

Delaware

By David Bartoo

The Delaware Department of Transportation is moving into final analysis to determine whether the Georgetown Lewes Rail Line will be converted over to recreation. If converted, it will add over a dozen miles of off-road trail to the ADT.

Maryland

By Harry David Cyphers

Works continues in the effort to complete an off-road trail from Greenbelt Park to the C&O Canal towpath as the Washington Nationals' new baseball stadium is developed. It is hoped that this project can be completed by 2010.

Ohio/Kentucky

By Pat Hayes

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources has a new Office of Trails that helps oversee revision of the state trail plan. This blueprint for trail priorities within the state includes a partnership between the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Ohio Department of Transportation, and metropolitan planning organizations, with the trails community providing input to the plan.

Iowa

By Tom Neenan

The Wabash Trace Trail and the Ice Age Trail are now complete so that area of the ADT is all off roads.

The Heart of Iowa Trail added two miles of finished trail and a few more miles of the ADT were paved in Des Moines. Three more miles of the trail south of Center Point are being paved.

Damage from the flooding in eastern Iowa last spring means there is still reconstruction work to be done. The Cedar Valley Trail was hit hard; the bridge across the Cedar River south of Waterloo was completely taken out. In Cedar Rapids, the Czech National Museum, which was beside the trail (and the river) and listed as an ADT point of interest was wiped out. Many businesses remained closed today.

Nebraska

By Gary Gebhard

We are finally on the verge of completing the Lincoln to Omaha bike trail that many have dreamed of since 1984. This trail does more than connect two major cities. It has numerous attractions near the halfway point at the Lied Bridge. Attractions only a couple of hours bike ride away includes the Strategic Air Command Museum; Mahoney, Schramm, and Platte River state parks; and Camp Kitaki. Exceptional wildlife viewing is possible at the Platte River and the Safari Park. Small towns, such as Southbend, Ashland, and Springfield, offer great dining and shopping experiences. The last link on the northeast side of the river is in the engineering phase, and only the southwest link from the Lied Bridge to the MoPac East near Wabash is yet to be finished.

Nevada

By Dale Ryan

The Six-Mile Canyon road has been improved, which should make hiking easier.

Those who detour off the ADT to use U.S. Highway 50 are missing the experience of Berlin/Ichthyosaur State Park and the town of Ione, population six. Ione has water, a city park, and a bar and grill. The trail user in Nevada has the opportunity to meet a real cowboy, a Basque sheep herder, and other trail users. They could also see bighorn sheep, antelope, deer, and cougar. I am willing to do whatever I can to help the ADT user complete his trip, so please contact me and let me know how we can help.

Hike of Almost 500 Miles Makes Summer Memorable

By Jim Bragg

I'm a fairly regular kind of guy. Brush my teeth when I get up, make the bed, change the oil in the car every 3,000 miles or so, pay my taxes on time, that kind of stuff. So where was my mind when I read about this mother-daughter team from Wisconsin who walked across the United States in eight months? I like to travel and figured, "If they can do it, why can't I?" Not too long before that I had heard a very powerful sentence made up entirely of two letter words: If it is to be, it is up to me. That really resonated with me. It also eliminated handy excuses for not trying something I had never before attempted.

Some might consider this rather noble. Not me. I know myself well enough to tell you, for me, it is more along the lines of curiosity, naiveté, trust, faith, and a dash of a doofus factor. Probably more than a dash. I try to not let a lack of planning or the reality of declining mental and physical abilities interfere with attempting something that might be a lot of fun.

So that's how I found myself on the Delaware coast on a hot June day facing west. I took a step—then another—and just ignored that nagging thought that this might not be so easy or possible after all. But I kept at it and a million steps and two months later I was in Ohio. It might have been just a few more or less, but I lost count and didn't want to start over. If nothing else, I am fairly persistent. Or at least bull-headed.

I did find out some things about myself during this odyssey—some of which pleased me. Not all, but some. First of all, I get poorer mileage than a totally tricked out honking four-wheel-drive pickup truck. That's kind of embarrassing, but true. My liquid intake of tea, water, and whatever was in the one to two gallons per day range, and most days I would travel about ten miles. You do the math. "Sweat much, pee little" could have been my motto. Does save wear and tear on the kidneys, I suppose.

Second, a backpack is a great conversation starter. "Where did you start?" "How far are you going?" "Why?" were the three

most common questions. The Delaware to Ohio folk responded, "That's so cool," "You are nuts," "Holy ----," and "Wow, just like Forrest Gump." The why question was more difficult because my answer would vary depending on my attitude of the day, which wasn't always sweet or positive. If I was flip-pant or a jerk when I answered some of your questions, I apologize.

The real answer to "why" is because it was something I was willing to try and would rather fail than not try and wish I had. I'm comfortable in this stage of my life to try and fail and still get satisfaction from the attempt.

Did I succeed? Guess I answered that in the previous paragraph. Was it pretty? Nah, not even close. A really good or great hiker can do 20-plus miles every day with long, effortless strides with their shoulders back and a smile on their faces. The ladies from Wisconsin did that. They had to work terribly hard to accomplish their remarkable feat. Me? I was on vacation. I told people I got paid by the hour rather than the mile.

This was surely a good thing because it didn't take any kind of an excuse for me to sit down and talk with whomever I met if they were willing to visit—on a bench, on a rock, or in a shady spot. Sitting down and resting was my specialty. I took days off, too. Sometimes several in a row. No law against it.

My feet blistered. On some of the longer days I could see something that looked suspiciously like a double-drag mark in the dust behind me. Maybe that would explain some of the scratches on my backside. And I accepted several rides. So much for being a virtuous hiker who walks every step of the way without any assistance from anyone. Why did I accept rides? Mostly because it was convenient. One time it was due to dangerous heat wave conditions during the first couple of days of travel. Maybe a better term for my traveling style would be a wanderer rather than a pure hiker. It didn't make it any less fun for me.

My two fuzzy goals for the summer were to make it to Ohio and complete a

minimum of 500 miles. I made it to New Philadelphia, Ohio, but that was about 20 miles short of the 500 mile goal. However, it was at this point that something went out of whack on one foot and there were convenient bus connections. Thought those were sufficient reasons to quit for this year.

Next year may present more opportunities to practice virtues along the trail if I'm so inclined. Body and spirit permitting, next year I hope to begin where I left off and continue west to at least cross the Mississippi. I hope to give you another update about a year from now.

It was a remarkable and memorable summer because of the people I met. I don't know whether I would have continued some days if it hadn't been for the encouragement and aid I got from fellow travelers and others I met along the trails and roads. I'm so impressed with the kindness, support, and compassion people shared with me along the way. It was inspirational. That's a word I don't use lightly. In my situation, it helped me when I needed it the most.

When I would quit for the day I usually had such warm memories from encounters that the few aches and blisters that may have accumulated were nothing in comparison. To each one of you I'd like to say a very sincere thank you. You made my travels worthwhile and memorable.

A retired dairy farmer from north-central Wisconsin, Jim Bragg hiked on the American Discovery Trail and the Great Allegheny Passage (Cumberland, Md., to Pittsburgh, Pa.) during the summer of 2008.

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Small Discoveries



Plow in the Oak

Sometimes discoveries are of the small variety—too small to draw much attention, but too interesting to be ignored. Since non-motorized travel lends itself to noticing things that might otherwise get overlooked, the American Discovery Trail is perfect for taking in these small discoveries.

One has to look closely to see the small remnants of the single blade farm plow that dates from the era when such implements were pulled by a horse or oxen. Now protected in a five-acre park in Exira, Iowa, only a small bit of its blade and handle protrude from the burr oak tree that has engulfed it. How did it get there and why? No one knows for sure, but there are stories that surround the Plow in the Oak.

The most popular legend is that a young farmer by the name of Frank Leffingwell was plowing his field when a group of Union soldiers marched past on their way to the Civil War in the early 1860s. The farmer unhitched his team, leaned his plow against a small sapling, and joined the Union forces. He never came back.

Over the decades, that sapling grew to be over 104 inches in circumference and lifted the plow off the ground. Some say it was rediscovered by a railroad construction crew around 1880. Although facts may not be known, there it stays to this day, firing the imagination of who its owner was and why it was left behind.

Do you know of other small discoveries along the ADT? Send their stories and photos to the editor so they can be featured in a future newsletter: happifeet@msn.com

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HARP

(Continued from page 1)

Boats, Blues and BBQ is the premier summer event on the Riverwalk with great food, live music, and a festival atmosphere including ice cream eating contests and cook-offs. The local YMCA features Steps to a Healthier Colorado - Pueblo County, where people can walk together before work each morning to stay in shape.

There is an annual Fourth of July patriotic concert, a weekly farmer's market, and summer Sunday night serenades. The Holiday Lighting Extravaganza offers children a boat ride with Santa and a chance for everyone to enjoy fireworks.

Sidewalk cafes and several concessions are open along the way for refreshments and one can often find at least one musician taking advantage of the acoustics under one of the bridges. Kids enjoy playing in the fountains on hot summer days.

By linking in to the HARP and other trails like it, the American Discovery Trail leads not only to physical and scenic adventures but also to the people and history of the areas it traverses. It showcases what trails can bring to communities and how they can improve the quality of life for those who live near them.

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Trails as Education

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sioned a nationally acclaimed military artist to design a set of posters depicting four important elements of Pike's expedition. These included his negotiations with the Pawnee on the Nebraska-Kansas border; the view of Pike's Peak, the mountain named after him, from the city of Pueblo; Pike's entry into Santa Fe as a prisoner of the Spanish; and the fandango that was held in his honor before his release from prison.

The posters were then used to supplement a cross discipline curriculum guide that was developed by graduate students in education based on Pike's expedition. The curriculum guide included math, social studies, science, and physical education activities and was distributed to local educators.

These posters and curriculum guides not only provide a visual element to the region's history, but they also help ensure that Pike's story continues to be told through field trips to bring the story to life. During 2006, the bicentennial of Pike's expedition, commemorative events were scheduled in communities across the region that ranged from rodeos to symposiums, trail rides to lectures, and buffalo roasts to debates.

Knowledge of Pike's contribution to the area can bring citizens regional pride in their history and trails can be an important element in bringing people to the sites where history happened.

ADT Attracts a Multitude Of Kinds of Trail Users

Have you ever wondered who is using the American Discovery Trail besides those long-distance hikers? There's plenty of opportunity to enjoy our trails for a day, a weekend, or more even if you don't have months to spare. Here's a partial listing of groups and events along the ADT:

Each Martin Luther King Day weekend brings **Ohio's** Buckeye Trail Association intrepid winter enthusiasts out for a hike regardless of the weather. Judging from the turnout, there are plenty of them who don't let some cold or snow keep them home. In addition to hiking, the Buckeye Trail Association schedules multiple maintenance trips each year to improve trail conditions. The annual ADT State to State half marathon is another event in the state, in Oxford.

On the third Saturday of each month in **Southern Indiana**, volunteers help maintain the Knobstone Trail. Hikers from the Bedford Hiking Club meet for walks on a regular basis. Members of the Bloomington Hiking Club hike on the ADT each Saturday.

Northern Indiana has a number of hiking groups from which to choose. There is an active Cardinal Greenway group while the American Discovery Trail Hikers, based in Richmond, take regular hikes. The Indianapolis Hiking Club also leads hikes along our route as well as other places.

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Buckeye Trail Association hikers gather for the annual Martin Luther King Day hike in January.

Photo courtesy of Pat Hayes

A Multitude of Users

(Continued from Page 5)

Rather than hiking, **Northern Illinois** seems to take to bicycling in a big way. Each year there is a scheduled Grand Illinois Trail and Parks (GITAP) bicycle tour that benefits the League of Illinois Bicyclists. This year's seven-day event will be held June 14–20 and will feature a sampling of routes on the Grand Illinois Trail combined with overnights at four out-

standing parks for a total mileage of 301 to 585 miles. The ride is mostly flat, but hilly options are available on some days. The ride is limited to 160 riders. For more information, visit www.bikelib.org/gitap; e-mail Chuck Oestreich at oestreich@qconline.com; or call 309-788-1845.

The hills of **Southern Illinois** are more conducive to hiking and the River to River Society publishes spring and fall hiking schedules each year. More than 560 people participated in the hikes last year. They'll celebrate National Trails Day on June 6

with bratwurst, beans, and pie followed by trails stories and mellow time "staring into a campfire."

Colorado is home to the annual ADT Marathon every Labor Day near Colorado Springs. Last year more than 1,000 runners came to experience this Rocky Mountain high which is a qualifier for the Boston marathon.

Nevada shows off the trail with an annual Pony Express Re-ride each June. Over 550 riders took part this past year.

California hosts another summertime equestrian opportunity, the Tevis Cup Ride from Lake Tahoe's Squaw Valley to Auburn. For 100 grueling miles of steep, mountainous terrain nearly 200 horses and riders test their mettle. The Western States Endurance Run follows in their footsteps (hoofmarks?), as upwards of 350 runners run the same course.

Nebraska has the Corporate Cycling Challenge in August in which more than 4,000 riders get some exercise while raising money for the Nebraska Trails Foundation to use for trail development in the Omaha metro area.

With all of these hikers, cyclists, and horseback riders taking advantage of the ADT, it can be easy to connect with a trail group in your area to make friends, enjoy the outdoors, and stay in shape. For information on trail groups near you, visit the ADT Society website for your state coordinator's contact information: www.discoverytrail.org.