



# Discover America

Newsletter of the American Discovery Trail Society

Volume 9, Number 2

www.discoverytrail.org

Summer 2004

## ADT Featured Trail: A Capital Trail!



ADT travelers Bill and Laurie Foot in front of Washington Monument.

By Harry Cyphers

"It is a capital idea!" said Frederick Law Olmsted, the famous landscape architect when he was asked to design Rock Creek Park. Today the nation's capital boasts one of the largest natural urban parks in the country. The entire regional park contains over 5000 acres extending from the Potomac River north to the creek's source at Laytonsville, Md. John Burroughs, the famous naturalist, wrote in 1868, "There is, perhaps, not another city in the United States that has on its threshold so much natural beauty and grandeur, such as men seek for in remote forests and mountains."

Rock Creek Park is the southern end of this system that winds north to south through the center of the District of Columbia. A wooded oasis roughly one mile wide and five miles long, it is basically a steep ravine carved by the creek eons ago. From an adjoining urban street near a rock formation known as Pulpit Rock, one begins the descent into the gorge on one of many hiking trails to where a path edges along the east bank. The creek here is wide and rocky,

with branches and boulders impeding the flow, causing the water to swirl and eddy as it falls 80 feet in less than a mile. The sound of rushing water drowns out any spurious city noises. It's a rugged scene, more like Colorado than Washington, D.C. The rugged hiking trails lacing the steep hillsides and the bicycle trail that threads its way along the valley floor are but two of the premier features of the park. The park also contains a restored grain mill, stables, and quaint stone bridges and is bordered by the National Zoological Park, Civil War forts, and historic homes.

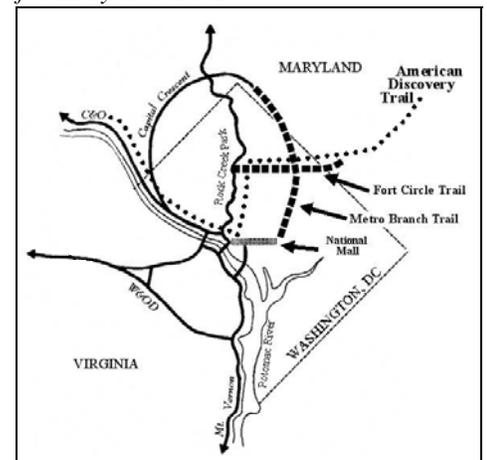
In recent decades, the District, working with the National Park Service and encouraged by grassroots support, has been adding east and west arcs to form a bicycle beltway, essentially a circular trail system, bisected by the Rock Creek Trail. The western arc of this beltway, the Capital Crescent Trail, follows the abandoned Baltimore and Ohio railroad bed from the Potomac River to Silver Spring. This scenic 11-mile route overlooks the Potomac and then wends its way north to the impressive restored trestle bridge crossing over Rock Creek. The west-

ern approach to the trestle bridge leads to an adjacent 13.5-mile hiker/biker trail. On the east side, the District is completing segments of the 10-mile Metropolitan Branch Trail that runs from Silver Spring to the National Mall and Union Station, the restored historic railway station still servicing the capital. This will be a rail-with-trail system—still a fairly new concept.

The eastern arc encompasses historic sites such as Catholic University, Colonel Brook's Tavern, and Fort Totten. Fort Totten is a remnant of the string of 68 forts built during the Civil War to protect the nation's capital. The northeast arc of this ring intersects the Fort Circle Trail, which leads east to Maryland, where it connects to the extensive Anacostia Tributary Trail System. This green swath of Park Service land extends west past Fort Stevens and Fort DeRussey along aptly named Military Road to Rock Creek Park. This is the ADT's entry point to this system.

The impressive trails throughout the nation's capital serve as the nexus for a multi-state trail network. These trails embody everything the American Discovery Trail strives to accomplish. They combine historic, scenic, urban, and natural features for the enjoyment of hikers, bikers, and equestrians with easy access for literally millions of people.

Harry Cyphers is ADT state coordinator for Maryland and D.C.



## Go Take a Hike! Lipton Tea Urges Americans to Hit the Trail

Lipton Tea is now a proud sponsor of the American Discovery Trail and has launched a nationwide initiative encouraging Americans to live healthier, more active lives. The Simple Steps program is designed to educate the public about the health benefits of hiking—one of the country's fastest growing leisure activities and a simple and natural way to be good to your body. Lipton Tea embarks on this as part of its effort to communicate the health benefits of drinking Lipton Tea, due to its antioxidant properties.

As part of the initiative, an interactive exhibit will hit the road this summer, making more than 50 appearances in 18 cities over the next six months, stopping at food festivals, state fairs, concerts and other venues. To find an exhibit near you, visit [www.lipton.com](http://www.lipton.com). At the exhibits, people of all ages will be able to test their hiking skills by taking half-mile virtual hikes—ranging from desert terrain to cityscape walks—all housed within a specially designed 32-foot “Virtual Hiking Vehicle.”

Participants also can solicit expert advice from *Backpacker* and *Prevention* magazine editors as well as Columbia Sportswear experts regarding hiking equipment, local area trails (including information on access and proximity to the American Discovery Trail) and the benefits of tea and hiking.

“The connection between hiking and Lipton Tea is clear,” says Ginny Blakewest, senior marketing director of the Pepsi-Lipton Tea Partnership. “Both are refreshing and natural ways to be good to yourself. The Simple Steps program is dedicated to helping Americans realize that there are easy, enjoyable activities we can incorporate into our routines, one step at a time, that will help us lead healthier, more active lives.”

For its part of the project, between May and October, the ADT Society is organizing a hike in each state through which the trail passes. The hikes include a Fourth of July Fun Run in Orinda, Calif.; a hike on the New Santa Fe Trail in Palmer Lake, Colo., on September 11; the Grand Opening of the new Volksmarching Course in Green Mountain Falls, Colo., on August 28; a hike or bike ride in Hennepin Canal State Park in Illinois on October 3; and a hike on Indiana's Knobstone Trail on September 25.

For a complete list of hikes with contact information, keep your eye on the ADT website at [www.discoverytrail.org](http://www.discoverytrail.org).

Proud sponsor of  
the ADT Society



## Converse Junction Trail Receives Building Grant

Converse, Ind., received a \$950,000 matching grant last year to build a walking, hiking, and biking trail about 35 miles northwest of Indianapolis.

Plans are for construction to begin by midsummer on the trail that is to be called the Converse Junction Trail. It will connect to the Sweetser Switch Trail and continue through to the edge of Converse.

Eventually, the trail will be extended into Marion and link up with the Cardinal Greenway. This will be another vital link for the ADT.

## Take a Summer Hike on The Tahoe Rim Trail

The Tahoe Rim Trail Association in Nevada, an ADT affiliated trail group, is scheduling several summer hikes of various difficulty levels along its scenic path this summer. The hikes range from two to 32 miles in length and are happening June through September.

For information and dates, visit [www.tahoerimtrail.org](http://www.tahoerimtrail.org). For reservations, contact Erin at [erinc@tahoerimtrail.org](mailto:erinc@tahoerimtrail.org) or 775-298-0012.

## People on the Trail

**Jim Shaner**, the Pennsylvania minister who began his “One Nation Under God – Walk Across America” on the ADT last year, now has accumulated a total of 42 hikers who have walked part of the way with him while praying for our nation. He and others from his group have logged 394 trail miles so far. In May, they even walked across 4.3 miles of water. The Chesapeake Bay Bridge in Maryland, normally closed to pedestrians, was opened to walkers on May 2 for the annual Bay Bridge Walk. Shaner reported that hundreds of others attended this event.

**Matt Parker** resumed his horseback ride across America on the ADT on June 13. Last year he rode more than 1,000 miles from California to eastern Utah. He stopped for the winter just outside Can-

yonlands National Park, stabling his horse and mule. Matt plans to take some alternate routes from the ADT in areas where horses would be unsuitable, such as in the Denver urban trail system. He will follow the southern route through Kansas.

## Invitation to the ADT Society Annual Meeting

The 2004 annual meeting of the American Discovery Trail Society will be held on Saturday, September 18, in southern Illinois. The meeting will be in the office of Shawnee National Forest, 50 Highway 145 South, Harrisburg, Illinois. The meeting will be at 8 a.m. and followed by a board of directors meeting. The meeting is open to all ADTS members. Please contact host and Southern Illinois Coordinator John O'Dell for more information at 618-252-6789 or [jodell@shawneelink.net](mailto:jodell@shawneelink.net)

## ?? Discovery Questions ??

We are introducing a new feature in this issue of the *Discover America* newsletter—a Discovery Question from Harv Hisgen, our chair of discovery and education.

The questions are meant to stimulate discussion, require some thinking, and possibly invite research to come up with a good guess. The answer can be found on the bottom of page 4.

But don't be tempted to look until you have really given the answer some thought. And now, (drumroll!) here are the first Discovery Questions:

Where are the highest point on the ADT and the lowest point on the ADT? What are the elevations?

## Harv Hisgen: Wearer of Many Hats

Harv Hisgen has been involved with the ADT for a number years in a large variety of ways. He has served as an ADTS board member since 1996. He was the state coordinator for Northern Illinois and has been the secretary for the board and a previous newsletter editor. Harv's current responsibilities include Vice President and Chair of Discovery and Education. He has been a field investigator in several states, checking out the route on the ground. He is now thoroughly engrossed as one of two digital mapping consultants working hard to provide accurate and reasonably priced maps for ADT users.

A retired chemistry and physics teacher from Illinois, Harv now lives in Colorado where he can daily view the snow-capped Continental Divide. He loves mountain living at 7400 feet elevation above Denver and is an avid hiker and backpacker who sometimes throws a bit of bicycling into the mix. Harv says he enjoys climbing 14,000-foot mountains in Colorado, discovering the ADT in the backcountry of



*Harv Hisgen atop Mt. Bierstadt.*

Utah and Nevada, and helping to make the ADT a safe, wonderful experience for all who choose to use the official route.

"[Colorado state coordinator] Dick Bratton and I especially want to encourage folks to discover the official route as [last year's

thru-hikers] the Cottrells and Matt Parker (see story page 2) did in Utah and Nevada! The country is beautiful, especially the ten mountain-valley terrain areas in eastern to central Nevada."

Harv is also passionate about the concept of discovery. "Discovery is part of our name, and we need to provide discovery experiences; something that challenges the individual to use his/her gray matter and not just read something on a trail sign. For example, in southern Illinois in Prairie du Rocher, Fort de Chartres State Historic Site serves as an important marker in the French empire in America. Why is it so important? Contact me at 303-526-2411 or [bjatashley@aol.com](mailto:bjatashley@aol.com). I won't tell you the answer, but I'll get you started on the road to discovering why." Harv just returned from a discovery trip of his own in Nebraska, Iowa, and northern Illinois (before the tornadoes).

Harv and his wife, Bonnie, reside in Golden, Colo., where they own and operate the Ashley House Bed and Breakfast. Harv and Bonnie have three sons, three wonderful daughters-in-law, and eight grandchildren.

---

## Grand Illinois Guidebook

The northern branch of the American Discovery Trail runs through northern Illinois and just happens to coincide with a lot of the Grand Illinois Trail. "This is a dream trail for the Midwest," said Todd Volker, author of *The Complete Grand Illinois Trail Guidebook*. "And some 11 million people have convenient access to it."

The Grand Illinois Trail is a 550-mile loop trail that runs from Lake Michigan's Chicago shoreline to the Mississippi River, heads north along the river to historic Galena, and strikes back to Chicago through Freeport and Rockford, returning to the city along the beautiful Fox River valley. Spurs are projected to reach to Madison and Milwaukee, Wisc. Along its way, it traverses the I & M Canal Trail, the Hennepin Canal Trail, and the Old Plank Road Trail, all trails the ADT uses.

The Grand Illinois Trail encompasses a wide range of trail surfaces and trail environments but is designed for the average bicycle rider. You can tour along historic

canal towpaths, speed along former railroad and interurban routes, leisurely travel through manicured suburbs, and then kick up speed along scenic backroads.

Not all of Illinois is flat. The Grand Illinois Trail runs through unglaciated northwest Illinois as well as through hilly landscapes. It runs adjacent to the Mississippi River, the Illinois River, the Rock River (a beautiful blue ribbon), and the Fox River.

Natural areas include bogs, sand prairies, tallgrass prairies, river bottoms, and moraine uplands. The Illinois River and Mississippi River flyways are world-renowned. It includes Starved Rock State Park, quaint and charming Galena, a well-loved jewel box of historic architecture; and downtown Chicago and the famous Chicago Lakefront Path.

Newly released, *The Complete Grand Illinois Trail Guidebook* contains full route descriptions and maps, along with interesting items about the Black Hawk War, Illinois agriculture, nature and geography notes, birding tips, and local history. The

288-page book, at \$19.95, can be ordered from publisher FirstServePress at (800) 433-8868.

The state recognizes the people who complete the Grand Illinois Trail each year, designating an annual class of Trail Blazers. For more information about the Grand Illinois Trail, check with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources at [dnr.state.il.us/orep/planning/route.htm](http://dnr.state.il.us/orep/planning/route.htm).

## Bed, Breakfast, and Biking Guide Goes Online

A new online guide for bicyclists who also like to sleep and eat is now available on the web at [www.BBBiking.com](http://www.BBBiking.com).

The guide is designed for independent bicyclists and lists B&Bs and inns near bike trails and routes with contact information and a link to the innkeeper's website. Currently the guide includes B&Bs and inns along the ADT in the states of Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, and West Virginia.

## **ADTS Welcomes New Board Members**

Two new members have joined the Board of Directors of the ADTS as state coordinators.

**David Bartoo** is a trails specialist in the Division of Parks and Recreation for the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control. He oversees a statewide trail crew and has expertise working with geographic information systems. He holds a degree in geology and a graduate degree in environmental studies with a minor in administration. He has worked as a wilderness guide in Georgia, Big Bend National Park, and the San Juan Islands of Washington state. He's an experienced hiker and canoeist.

**Chuck Oestreich** is joining us as the Northern Illinois Coordinator. He also serves as the secretary for the League of Illinois Bicyclists, a board member of the Grand Illinois Trail, and a board member and newsletter editor for the Mississippi River Trail. He is active in River Action, a trail advocacy group. Chuck says, "Living within six blocks of two national trails (the ADT and the Mississippi River Trail), enjoying an extensive local trail (the Great River Trail), and acting as chairman of a week-long bicycle ride (The Grand Illinois Trail and Parks ride), which utilizes almost half of the ADT in northern Illinois, makes me very conscious of the importance and promise of an extensive trail system across

America. Others worked hard to give me wonderful trail facilities; I hope to contribute my share."

## **Trail Town Hit by Tornado**

Alert ADTS member Jean Ann Robinson called to report that the town of Utica, Ill., adjacent to the northern leg of the ADT where it coincides with the I&M Canal Trail, was devastated by a tornado in April. Utica is located near Starved Rock State Park, about 90 miles southwest of Chicago.

Many of the old structures in downtown Utica were constructed of sandstone and Joliet limestone building blocks but even that couldn't hold up to the fury of the tornado that cut a swath about 2 blocks wide through the center of the village and killed eight people. A grain truck was found overturned in the I & M Canal that runs through downtown Utica.

Although some of the businesses may be temporarily closed, ADT users can expect the town to be restored as Ill. Gov. Rod Blagojevich said that the state would make whatever investment is necessary to help the community.

*Discovery Questions Answers: The American Discovery Trail's highest point is Whale Peak at 13,078 feet in the Front Range near Georgetown, Colo. The lowest point is in California's Sacramento River delta region, south of Sacramento and northwest of Antioch, at -3 feet .*

## **Coleman Continues Its Support for ADT Website**

The ADT Society would like to thank The Coleman Company for its large grant for continued support of the ADT website.

With the Society's current mapping project and updating of route directions currently on the website, there will be many changes to the site in the coming months as well as additions of other information. Coleman's support will make these continued improvements possible.

Coleman has been a major supporter of the ADT for every year since the trail's inception, beginning with its major sponsorship of the original ADT Scouting Expedition in 1990-91.

**Sponsor of the American  
Discovery Trail Society:**



*Making Connections...*

*Coast to Coast*

**American Discovery Trail Society**  
**PO Box 20155**  
**Washington, DC 20041-2155**  
**800-663-2387, Fax: 703-754-9008**  
**info@discoverytrail.org**