



Discover America

Newsletter of the American Discovery Trail Society

Volume 8

Number 2

Summer 2003

ADT Featured Trail:

River to River Trail

The River to River Trail in southern Illinois has been in existence since the beginning of the Shawnee National Forest. But nothing really happened to develop this into a usable trail until the American Discovery Trail launched its scouting team to find a route across the country in 1990. For over 40 years there had been hit and miss efforts to develop this trail between the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. Parts of it were there, parts were on maps but not there, and some parts did not exist at all. User groups could not get along and the state and federal agencies were taking a hands-off approach. Nothing was getting done. Because of the publicity of the ADT joining with the River to River Trail, people began to talk, meetings were held, and the economic and recreational benefits were identified. The River to River Trail

Society was organized, the trail was marked, and people began hiking from Battery Rock on the Ohio River to Devil's Backbone on the Mississippi.

Today the River to River Trail is a well-established 175-mile trail, maps and a guidebook are available, and a support organization of over 1,000 members is active. There is shuttle availability and access to information on its web site as well as by direct telephone contact. People, from not only the Midwest but also from across the country and even an occasional foreign visitor, come to hike its path.

Backpacker magazine identified it as the best trail in Illinois in 1997. Recently, *USA Today* reported on the ten most photogenic places in the United

(Continued on page 4)

People on the Trail

Peter and Joyce Cottrell, the backpackers featured in the Autumn 2002 edition of this newsletter have now completed over 4,100 miles of the ADT. Starting in March 2002 at Cape Henlopen, the Cottrells hauled their packs through the eastern United States past forests and prairies before stopping in Pueblo, Colo., for four months waiting for winter to pass. They spent their time working at the local Wal-Mart to earn money for the rest of their trip. Eager to start, they began hiking again on March 1. They made it through Colorado and past Canyonlands National Park in Utah before being halted by snow again at the higher elevations. Skipping ahead to Nevada, the Cottrells still encountered snow on the mountain passes so they skipped on to Ione, Nev., crossed the desert lands of western Nevada, and went back to work at Wal-Mart in Carson City. On June 3, they put on their packs once again and returned to Canyonlands NP to make up the parts they had missed. The Cottrells' journey has recently been featured in CNN.com and the *New York Times*. Go to www.discoverytrail.org for updates on their progress.

Matt Parker, 23, wants to be the first person to ride across the United States on the ADT on a horse. He left Antioch, Calif., on May 30 on his Tennessee walking horse, Smokey. Matt has hiked and camped extensively through Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and India. As of press time, Matt had completed California and was entering Nevada. Dick Bratton, VP of Public Relations for the ADTS reports, "From Carson City, Matt will ride eastward on a portion of the American Discovery Trail that follows the famous Pony Express Route." Follow Matt on his journey on his website at <http://mattandsmokey.blogspot.com>. ■



Garden of the Gods, River to River Trail, Illinois

Documenting the ADT: Looking to the Future

Part three of three articles

By Harry Cyphers and Reese Lukei

The ADT currently boasts a completely documented 6800 mile trail across the breadth of the United States. It provides a link to: five of the eight National Scenic Trails, ten of the 13 National Historic Trails, 23 National Recreation Trails, and seven of the 16 recently designated National Millennium Trails. The American Discovery Trail is truly a trail of national significance.

The advent of the completed ADT website has brought a wave of new viewers with a heightened interest in outdoor activities. Viewers and users of the website continue to offer suggestions for improvements to the documentation. In addition, technological improvements such as digital mapping techniques and the availability of compact, highly accurate, inexpensive, global positioning satellite (GPS) receivers are being incorporated into the trail descriptions.

Just as the Internet provided a means to overcome logistical hurdles in providing an accessible description of the ADT route, the GPS revolution will change the way we map, describe, and navigate the trails that make up the ADT. The completion of the digitization of U.S. Geological Survey quadrangle maps for the entire United States makes available the latest information in a more versatile form.

Private industry is utilizing this treasure trove in numerous ways, including automobile and ship on-board navigation systems. This form of data makes it relatively easy to superimpose on a map of a specific area any desired feature such as a trail. We see this capability almost every day in newspaper articles that contain maps showing parade routes or other events.

Outdoor recreation stores are beginning to offer kiosks that have equipment capable of producing selected maps of recreation areas overlaid with the trail of interest. These sequential maps are available in various scales along with a tabulation of GPS coordinates that can serve

as waypoints for an extended trip. Both topographical and street map presentations are available. Currently, there are high-quality, high-resolution topographic maps of the ADT route complete with GPS coordinates through two states, California and Colorado. Others will soon be available.

Availability of GPS data to trail travelers is especially important for safety and possible rescue contingencies. The ADT promises a travel experience like no other, the trail is a true reflection of our country, containing something for everyone. At the same time, to safely experience these varied and sometimes unique and challenging trail conditions, from city streets to remote desert and mountain reaches, requires good planning, common sense, and taking advantage of all the available resources. Modern technology in the form of the Internet, GPS receivers, cell phones, and things not yet invented will be an integral part of the American Discovery Trail.

The ADT Society plans to add to the *discovery* aspect of the ADT so that people can experience the trail without being there. A demonstration CD was made presenting some of the many educational opportunities a multi-faceted trail such as the ADT can offer. The ADTS Discovery and Education Committee is continuing to pursue these possibilities for classroom and home use. School classes, physically disadvantaged persons, and families planning a trail experience will, in the future, be able to take a virtual hike along the ADT and learn about the natural, historic, and scenic features of a segment of interest to them. This would be an ideal precursor to actually traveling the trail.

By the end of 2002, qualified ADTS members will be able to update the website in their areas of interest and expertise. Already states are taking ownership of the portions of the site that describe the assets, interesting features, and events occurring in their state. In Colorado, state coordinator Dick Bratton has incorporated several innovative ideas into the state's trail descriptions, making it the precursor of things to come. These individuals are the best persons to keep the site current with upcoming events, trail openings, etc. The capability to easily insert pictures, maps, and text on the

site offers opportunity to present their assets in the best light.

The Society is currently gathering the information to make available by state and region the web addresses for the parks, affiliated trails, and points of interest along the ADT corridor. Many of these facilities are currently listed by name on the states' home pages.

Several states (Delaware, West Virginia, Colorado, and Maryland) are currently integrating the ADT into their visitor information systems. When queries about specific outdoor recreation opportunities in a particular area are requested, links to relevant websites will provide a seamless transition to the information about the desired activity. An inquiry to the West Virginia Trails Coalition at www.wvtrails.org for hiking and biking opportunities in West Virginia, for example, brings forth a host of hiking and biking activities throughout the state, including the ADT.

A frequent request of trail users is a listing of trail facilities and accommodations along their planned route. The abbreviated website descriptions can provide some of this information. Additional information is being prepared in the form of a tabular listing, by state, of approximately 30 types of facilities ranging from campgrounds to shoe repair keyed to cities and towns conveniently spaced across a state. Separate lists of housing accommodations are also in preparation, some by commercial entities such as B&B organizations. This type of information is also finding its way onto the Internet.

The American Discovery Trail Society has truly created a nationwide system of trails that unite this country together with threads of greens not by building trails but by bringing together the efforts of many individuals that have preceded us. The ADT endeavors to provide a recreational experience to all people, young or old, rural or urban, from the physically challenged to the extreme athlete using a walking stick or a global positioning system. Look around, the ADT or one of its tentacles may be in your backyard. ■

Harry Cyphers is ADT Coordinator for Maryland and Reese Lukei is ADT VP of Legislative Affairs.



Lukei Retires as National Coordinator

Reese Lukei has recently retired as the ADTS National Coordinator, a position he has held since the original scouting team completed their efforts in 1991.

During his tenure, Reese traveled along the length of the ADT two times meeting with various state officials, agency representatives, and interested citizens in all states along the route to make sure it had the support and endorsement of the local population. Reese recruited volunteer state coordinators for each state the trail passes through to oversee the trail's development in their area. He explained, "This local participation was key to the ADT's success and we were fortunate to find really good people in each state."

"One of the most rewarding aspects of being the National Coordinator," Reese stated, "was seeing how the American Discovery Trail was able to take the local interest in trails and provide an incentive for the communities to move forward with their plans." Prime examples of this were in Delaware, West Virginia, and

Illinois. The interest was already there but the ADT's ability to link trails and communities together encouraged them and gave them the credibility they needed.

Another significant achievement that Reese accomplished was in helping to shepherd the feasibility study that was done by the National Park Service though to completion. With this groundwork laid, the trail was able to gain recognition.

Reese's efforts have been a big reason behind the American Discovery Trail's progress from idea to reality. While we are happy to thank him for a job well done, we are grateful that he has agreed to stay on the board of the ADTS and has accepted the position of Vice President of Legislative Affairs. ■

New ADT Route into St. Louis

The ADT route across the Mississippi River has long been the use of the Metro train from East St. Louis into St. Louis. With the renovation of the Eads Bridge, a dedicated, protected lane along the south edge of the bridge is now available for pedestrians and bicyclists. The ADT will use this route to bring users into the downtown St. Louis area near the Gateway Arch. Although a footpath across the Mississippi River was always a goal of the American Discovery Trail Society, previous money that had been appropriated for a pedestrian route was used for flood repair after the 1993 floods in that area so that effort was delayed.

The grand reopening of the Eads Bridge will be held on Friday, July 4, 2003, as part of the opening activities for Fair St. Louis. This reopening date commemorates the original opening date in 1874. A mass bike ride will start at the East St. Louis entrance at 8:30 that morning. Marching bands will lead a 9 a.m. procession from each side of the bridge to the center stage.

The Eads Bridge was renovated with than \$30,000,000 in public investments. Additionally, Trailnet, a St. Louis area trails organization, raised \$1,000,000 privately to provide railings and lighting for the protected lane. The ADTS would like to congratulate them on a job well done. ■



Gateway Arch, St. Louis, Missouri

New State Park Named for Pat Jones

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources has named its new state park at the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers for Pat Jones and her late husband. The new Edward "Ted" and Pat Jones-Confluence Point State Park recognizes their leadership in conservation efforts. Involved in many trail projects, Ted and Pat Jones were two of the founding forces behind the Katy Trail, a key 152-mile link for the ADT. ■

New Buckeye Trail Guide

A new trail guide for the Buckeye Trail has been published. The ADT is prominently mentioned in it. *"Follow the Blue Blazes" A Guide to Hiking Ohio's Buckeye Trail* by Robert J. Pond is published by Ohio University Press. It is available online at www.buckeyetrail.org or by mail at Buckeye Trail Association, PO Box 254, Worthington, OH 43085 ■

NON PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT # 1
DULLES, VA

River to River Trail

Continued from Page 1

States and listed Garden of the Gods in the Shawnee National Forest, at the foot of which is the River to River Trail and the American Discovery Trail. The River to River Trail also winds through Lusk Creek Canyon National Scenic Area, Giant City and



Giant City State Park

Ferne Clyffe State Parks, and many other scenic areas along its way through the plains, rocky wilderness, and wetland bayous of southern Illinois.

The trail is marked with white wooden diamonds with "blue i's" painted on them. It is a shared trail, accessible to both hikers and horses.

The River to River Trail is a prime example of how the ADT brought organizations, agencies, user groups, and citizens together to provide a first-class trail in a region. Now that both the ADT and the River to River Trail are complete, the ADT continues to bring people to the River to River Trail because of its inclusion in a national trail.

For more information on the River to River Trail, check out www.river-torivertrail.org, call 618-252-6789, or write River to River Trail Society, 1142 Winkleman Road, Harrisburg, IL 62946 ■

John O'Dell named Volunteer of the Year

John O'Dell, ADT state coordinator for Southern Illinois, has been selected as American Hiking Society's Volunteer of the Year for Illinois. John was instrumental in the formation of the River to River Trail Society and serves as its president. He also serves as Vice President of Development for the ADT Society.

Congratulations on your well deserved recognition, John! ■



Do you have a used vehicle you were planning to get rid of? The American Discovery Trail Society is now part of V-DAC, a vehicle donation program that can convert your car, truck, or RV into a donation to the ADTS. The service is totally free and includes a free vehicle pick-up service to anywhere in the U. S. It's a win-win situation. The donor is eligible for a tax deduction at the vehicle's Retail Fair Market Value and the ADTS receives a cash donation.

For more information, go to the ADT website at www.discoverytrail.org and click on the V-DAC icon on our home page. It looks like the logo above. Or call 1-866-332-1778. ■

Another Way to Give!

Remember the ADT when making workplace donations through United Way or the Combined Federal Campaign. Use the American Discovery Trail Society number, #2350, under Conservation and Preservation Charities to designate a portion of your contributions directly to us. ■