



Discover America

Newsletter of the American Discovery Trail Society

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Good Things are Happening All Along the ADT!

Ground Broken for Iowa/Nebraska Bridge

By Gary L. Gebhard, Nebraska State Coordinator

Bands played from Thomas Jefferson High School of Council Bluffs and from Central High School in Omaha. Two hundred enthusiastic people attended at the site on the west side of the bridge crossing. It was noted that one of the early settlers nearly 130 years ago stood on one of the hills, looked down at the two towns separated by a wide river, and remarked at how the number of lights from fires, lanterns, and candles lit up the whole sky. He then predicted that someday the two cities would appear as one large city with numerous bridges crossing the river for traffic in carts and on foot.

Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Omaha, Neb., are now bringing one of those bridges to life by breaking ground to build it. The bridge will become a part of the American Discovery Trail, and become a central connector of a major national trail. It is truly a chance to bring us together both in geography and in spirit of what one can do to make our country a better place.



Artist's conception of the future Council Bluffs/Omaha pedestrian bridge

At \$22 million dollars in cost, 3,000 feet in length, and 200 feet in height at the supporting cable-staying pillars, this bridge is destined to be a landmark, an icon for the region, and a symbol of what can be done by many working together, often in the face of those with less enthusiasm for the idea. However, great ideas seldom fade away and

though it took more than 20 years for this bridge to come to life, it has been worth the wait, worth the time to answer every criticism with reason, and worth keeping the spirit in believing in a dream of a safe pedestrian/bicycle crossing.

Locally, we will finally have a way to cross the Missouri River, which has been a barrier to connecting our local extensive trail networks on both sides of the river. At the national level, we have created a destination and a starting point. A starting point for others to follow as they take back home the idea of what a bridge can be.

The bridge is expected to be completed in about two years.

West Virginia Kiosk Constructed



Marcie Beyersdorfer and Jeff Shaw work on the newest kiosk along the ADT. Photo courtesy of Roger Boyer

The newest kiosk on the American Discovery Trail was completed on Sept. 30 in Dolly Sods, W. Va. The final product is the result of several years of work by VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) volunteers. First, Dustin Hancock got the ball rolling by getting the U.S. Forest Service to approve the project. Later, Marcie Beyersdorfer took the bull by the horns and constructed the kiosk with the help of her "volunteer" husband, Jeff Shaw. The Forest Service then "printed" the sign.

This latest kiosk is located in the Dolly Sods National Recreation

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Photo Finishes

A number of long-distance travelers finished in grand style this fall while others took a break for the winter months. Each hiker has a different story to tell of their experiences. Here's an update of those along the ADT this year; for more visit www.discoverytrail.org.



Robin and Patty reach the Pacific. Photo courtesy of Marcia Powers

Randy and Sheri Propster chose to hike the coast-to-coast American Discovery Trail as their honeymoon trip. They completed their journey on Nov. 15 despite 114 degree temperatures in Missouri and a foot of snow in the Colorado Rockies. Sheri said of the trip, "I didn't want it to end!"



Jakob and Tamar were joined by their parents for the last couple of miles. Photo courtesy of Marcia Powers

Robin Grapa and her mother, **Patty Laatsch**, finished their thru-hike of the ADT on Oct. 27 on Limantour Beach at Point Reyes National Seashore. Robin, a 26-year-old survivor of bone marrow disease, hiked the trail to celebrate her second chance at life and to give back to the foundation that helped her during her treatment. Robin said, "It was an amazing feeling to jump in that water! We're anxious to get home, but I'm actually surprised—I'm still looking forward to hiking in the spring! Not 4,600 miles, but maybe a three-day trip."

Dave Toolan and **Stuart Hamilton**, from the United Kingdom, are discovering the real America firsthand along the ADT and investigating a few pubs along the way, too. They hiked more than 2,000 miles from Cape Henlopen, Del., to Independence, Mo., before taking a break for the winter. Dave said, "We have been shown great generosity through the whole trip, and it has been a real privilege to be able to do this."



Randy and Sheri Propster celebrate a honeymoon to remember. Photo courtesy of Marcia Powers

Jakob and Tamar Teitelbaum from Montreal, Canada, journeyed across the ADT for nearly seven months before finishing on Nov. 17. In addition to hiking, they both have a love of reading. So, Tamar led the way with Jakob on her heels as he read a book out loud so they could both enjoy it at the same time. They could not pass a bookstore without adding some weight to their packs.

Debbie Schachner started on the ADT on the West Coast in 2005. This year, she made it to East St. Louis, Mo., before stopping for the winter on Nov. 18. Debbie's journal states, "It is neat to learn the history of the towns I walk through. Somehow it never interested me in school. The world is an excellent teacher."

Cabell King rode his bicycle cross-country pulling a trailer with a dog in it. Although he was unable to stick to much of the ADT route because of time constraints and the unsuitableness of his trailer for trails and gravel roads, Cabell finished at Cape Henlopen on Sept. 3.

Good Things Happening All Along the Discovery Trail:

West Virginia Kiosk

(Continued from page 1)

Area. Roger Boyer, coordinator for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service Potomac Headwaters Project, sees the kiosk as a real benefit to hikers. He says, "Every hiker who comes along the trail will learn more about the area, where they are in relation to the immediate surroundings. They also will have access to emergency information. We also hope that by providing a hospitable experience and information, some of the hikers will come back at a later date in order to learn more about the area."

This is the fifth kiosk that has been built along the American Discovery Trail in West Virginia. There is one more planned for Harpers Ferry National Historic Park. The others are located in:

1. Green Springs (Hampshire Co.)
2. Paw Paw (Morgan Co.)
3. Greenland Gap (Grant Co.)
4. Fort Ashby (Mineral Co.)

Colorado Builds Trails

Two new trail relocations were approved for Colorado to take the ADT off roads and provide a more scenic, safer experience.

The first is 1.4 miles on the second phase of the Ute Pass Trail and is part of the El Paso County Parks trail system. Funding was provided by a grant from the State Trails Committee using Colorado state

lottery funds and by El Paso County and private donations. The fact that this new trail would become a part of the ADT helped the project get a high score in the grant selection process. The project cost exceeded \$250,000.

The American Discovery Trail Society was represented at the July grand opening with banners and handouts.

The second relocation is 21 miles long and was recommended by John Hess, planning director for the town of Crested Butte. It takes advantage of the new Tony's Trail and the existing Lower Loop Trail, which runs from town parallel to Slate Creek and rejoins the existing ADT at Schofield Pass. A new pedestrian bridge across Slate Creek connects the Lower Loop Trail with the Slate Creek Road and spectacular Paradise Pass. The reroute adds miles of beautiful scenery to this segment.

The sixth annual ADT Colorado Marathon was held over Labor Day weekend, using the ADT in Colorado Springs. A record number of runners participated as the event has become well known and is a qualifier for the Boston Marathon. *Trail Runner* magazine calls it "one of America's top 20 trail marathons." The ADT receives lots of recognition at the event as the race announcer is Dan Cleveland, a member of the Colorado ADT committee.

Iowa Paves the Way

Work continues on paving the T-Bone Trail, a rail-trail which, when completed, will stretch 21 miles from Audubon to near the town of Atlantic. It is an important segment of the ADT. In 2007, three short sections should be paved, with the final portions of the trail being completed in 2008 or 2009, depending on funding.

Indiana Launches Initiatives

By Stacy Campbell, Southern Ind. Coord.

Cheers erupted in downtown Indianapolis when Gov. Mitch Daniels announced that the Indiana state government will commit over \$10 million to kick off a state trails initiative. The plan incorporates the ADT's northern and southern routes in a statewide master plan.



The ADT is one of the long, arterial trails with spur connections that will eventually enable all Hoosiers to live within 7.5 miles of a networking trail. Gov. Daniels said, "Right now, we have a unique opportunity in Indiana to use existing corridors, such as abandoned railways, to build a superb trails system." Through this trails initiative, the existing ADT route will move to off-road trails in many locations.

Dedicated trail enthusiasts joined to update the ADT Society about local changes and trail growth in the northern Indiana. A local trail group met with the ADT Society's Trail Management Committee at the National Trails Symposium in Davenport, Iowa, and proposed a route change from Marion, Ind., to Lansing, Ill., where the ADT links to the Old Plank Trail.

The proposed route would follow new rail-trails between Monterey and North Judson, follow an active railroad into Porter County, and then meet up with the Veterans Memorial Trail in Hebron. The trail will then lead to Crown Point and join the Pennsy Greenway into Illinois. Trail volunteers are working on a route to connect with the Old Plank Trail.



Many thanks to
The Coleman Company
for its continued support of the
American Discovery Trail!

Making Connections...
Coast to Coast

American Discovery Trail Society
PO Box 20155
Washington, DC 20041-2155
800-663-2387

info@discoverytrail.org
www.discoverytrail.org



Laurie Foot presents the Happifeet Award to Dick Bratton.

Dick Bratton Receives Happifeet Award

Dick Bratton, the American Discovery Trail Society's vice president of public re-

lations and Colorado state coordinator, received the Society's Happifeet Award at the October ADT Society board meeting.

The Happifeet Award is given to a volunteer whose actions, enthusiasm, and commitment to the American Discovery Trail are an inspiration to others. Bratton received the award as the result of his extraordinary efforts on behalf of the trail.

Bratton, as chair of public relations, has diligently kept the media and the board informed of the status of all of the long-distance travelers on the ADT, ensuring press coverage and exposure for the trail.

As Colorado State Coordinator, Bratton has encouraged more volunteers by developing a committee to oversee the trail in his large state. He has represented the ADT at various statewide trail functions, helped to create the first ADT marathon, and sought out better routing for the trail.

Grand Illinois Bike Tour Planned for June

The Grand Illinois Trail And Parks (GITAP) Bicycle Tour will be held June 17 to June 23, 2007.

The week-long bike ride is sponsored by the League of Illinois Bicyclists with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. It features a sampling of routes on the Grand Illinois Trail combined with overnights at four outstanding state parks and one school, and always includes a portion of the American Discovery Trail.

The ride begins and ends at Oswego, then makes an extended circular tour through northern Illinois, following three rivers – the Illinois, the Rock, and the Fox. The route is generally flat, with mileage choices ranging from 315 to 565 miles for the week. It is limited to 160 riders.

For information: www.bikelib.org/gitap; oestreich@qconline.com; or call Chuck Oestreich at 309-788-1845.

Memberships and Donations

A membership in the American Discovery Trail Society helps to promote and sustain America's only cross-country nonmotorized trail. It also makes a great gift!

Each new membership includes an ADT decal, patch, lapel pin, member I.D. card, and *Discover America* newsletter. Discovery and Life members also receive the book, *American Discoveries*, written by Eric Seaborg and Ellen Dudley.

- Yes, I want to be a part of this American adventure!
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member - \$1,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family - \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Member - \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> Member - \$30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discovery Member - \$100 | |

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: \$10 \$20 \$50 \$100 \$500 Other: _____

- Enclosed is my check (made payable to ADTS)
 Charge my MC VISA AMEX Discover

Card# _____ Exp. \ _____ Sign: _____
 Name _____ Phone _____
 Address _____ Email _____
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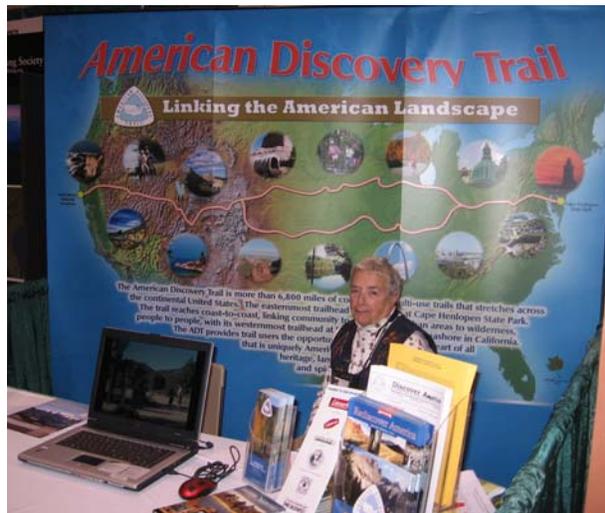
Mail to: American Discovery Trail Society
 PO Box 20155, Washington, DC 20041

Many ADT Locales Make Best Walkable Cities List

The American Podiatric Medical Association and *Prevention* magazine have published their list of the 100 Best Walkable Cities for 2006.

One of the unique characteristics of the American Discovery Trail is that it passes through many urban and metropolitan areas on local trails. Twelve ADT cities with populations over 200,000 made the Best Walkable Cities list. They are:

Colorado Springs, Colo.
Cincinnati, Ohio
Lincoln, Neb.
Denver, Colo.
San Francisco, Calif.
Omaha, Neb.
Des Moines, Iowa
Washington, D.C.
St. Louis, Mo.
Chicago, Ill.
Oakland, Calif.
Sacramento, Calif.



Susan Henley at the National Trails Symposium

National Trails Symposium

The National Trails Symposium, held Oct. 19–22 in the Quad Cities of Iowa and Illinois, was a great success. Over 600 people attended the symposium, including registrants from Canada, France, Jamaica, and 47 states plus Washington, D.C. There were 100 exhibitors and 150 presenters at the event.

Everyone who attended the American Discovery Trail’s annual meeting and board meeting, held in conjunction with the National Trails Symposium, remarked on how much attention the ADT received. A series of big blow-up charts of the trail were displayed at the banquet. Our ADT display panels and booth were placed in a prominent location in the exhibit area and staffed by Acting Executive Director Susan Henley.

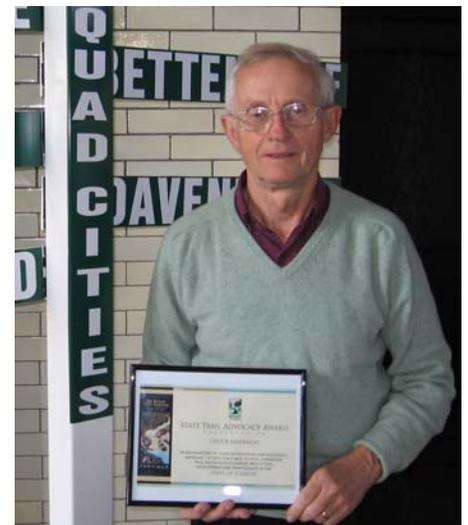
At two well-attended presentations on Thursday evening, Ken and Marcia Powers shared slides and stories of their recent thru-hike, with Dick Bratton, vice president of public relations, acting as the moderator. Reese Lukei, vice president of government affairs, represented the ADT in a session on Saturday offering tips on collaborative planning and development for long-distance trails.

At the Saturday night banquet, a Partnership Award was presented to the “American Discovery Trail Quad Cities Section” for the construction of a three-quarter mile segment of the ADT that connects the Great River Trail/Grand Illinois

Trail/Mississippi River Trail in Rock Island over the Government Bridge on Arsenal Island to the Mississippi River Trail in Davenport, Iowa. The award citation notes: “The collaborative support for this trail is at the heart of building, connecting, and promoting livable communities. Evidence and research show that, throughout the nation, trails are sought as an amenity and an attraction. This project makes trails in Illinois and Iowa

even more appealing by providing a safe crossing and access to additional features to visit.” Many ADT board members had a chance to walk across the new cycling/pedestrian bridge and see the sign calling it the ADT connection.

One of the big backers of this connection was Chuck Oestreich, ADT Northern Illinois coordinator. Chuck received an American Trails “State Trail Advocate” award for his efforts for trails in Illinois. Chuck is a board member and secretary of the League of Illinois Bicyclists. He has been a bicycling columnist for *Quad City Times* for seven years and is editor of *Illinois Bicyclist*, the newsletter of the League of Illinois Bicyclists. He has been a guest contributor to various trail-related publications, including *Discover America*, *The Green Scene*, and *American Trails*, and has worked to promote the safe use of trails.



Chuck Oestreich received advocate award.

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The festival included dedication of an official “Junction” sign. Photo courtesy of Jeanne Anslinger

Festival Celebrates Where It All Comes Together

By Pat Hayes, Ohio State Coordinator

The first Junction Trail Festival was held Sept. 8–10 in Milford, Ohio. The festival was conceived by outdoor enthusiasts Mike Nicolai and Brent Anslinger to celebrate the convergence of over 22,000 miles of hiking, biking, and paddling trails in the picturesque town of Milford along the banks of the Little Miami River in southwest Ohio. The eight trails comprising the 22,000-plus miles are the Little Miami Scenic Trail, Little Miami

National Scenic River, Buckeye Trail, American Discovery Trail, North Country National Scenic Trail, Sea to Sea Long Distance Hiking Route, Underground Railroad Cycling Route, and Ohio to Erie Cycling Route.

Friday evening, Chris McIntyre of the Buckeye Trail Association and I joined the crowd of people attending Andy Skurka’s sea-to-sea presentation. Andy told us about his journey, showed us some of the lightweight equipment he used, and answered questions. Andy was presented the first “Trails of the Junction Hall of Fame” award by trail angel and friend to

thru-hikers, Connie Snyder.

Saturday morning included a dedication of the official “Junction” site and sign. The rest of the day was taken up by presentations, competitions, entertainment, food, and plenty of interaction among trail representatives and festival guests. Chris McIntyre led a hike on the Buckeye Trail/American Discovery Trail/North Country Trail at East Fork State Park.

Mary Hayes staffed the American Discovery Trail display while I gave my ADT overview presentation and helped judge the homemade gear competition. In the evening, two British hikers, Stuart Hamilton and Dave Toolan, gave a terrific presentation on their experiences while hiking westward on the American Discovery Trail.

The festival wound down Sunday morning with a five-mile American Discovery Trail hike from Eden Park in Ohio to Devou Park in Kentucky.

For a first time event, the festival was quite successful. Plans are already under way for Junction Trail Festival 2007.

Attention Federal Employees

The ADTS is participating again this year in the Combined Federal Campaign nationwide. Please consider a donation to the ADT when you give this year.

The ADTS donation number is 2350.