



# Discover America

Newsletter of the American Discovery Trail Society

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## ADT Featured Trail: The Katy Trail



*Autumn colors along the Katy Trail*

Photo courtesy of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Katy Trail State Park offers a unique opportunity for people of all ages and interests. Whether you are a bicyclist, hiker, nature lover or history buff, the trail offers opportunities for recreation, a place to enjoy nature, and a way to discover the past.

Katy Trail State Park is built on the former corridor of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas (MKT) Railroad (better known as the Katy). When the railroad decided to cease operation on its route from Machens in St. Charles County to Sedalia in Pettis County in 1986, it presented the chance to create an extraordinary recreational opportunity—a long-distance hiking and bicycling trail that would run almost 200 miles across the state.

The opportunity for the Missouri Department of Natural Resources to acquire the

*Reprinted courtesy of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources from its website: [www.mostateparks.com](http://www.mostateparks.com).*

right-of-way was made possible by the National Trails System Act, which provides that railroad corridors no longer needed for active rail service can be banked for future transportation needs and used on an interim basis for recreational trails. Because of a generous donation by the late Edward D. “Ted” Jones, the department was able to secure the right-of-way and construct the trail. In 1991, the Union Pacific Railroad donated to the state an additional 33 miles of rail corridor from Sedalia to east of Clinton. Additional purchases and donations have been added.

Today, the Katy Trail is open for 225 miles from St. Charles to Clinton and is operated by the Department of Natural Resources as part of the state park system. The trail allows users to travel through some of the most scenic areas of the state. The majority of the trail closely follows the route of the Missouri River so hikers and bicyclists

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## Catching the Katy on a Slow Trip Through Missouri

*By Jim Hopson*

It would take a mental patient to characterize walking 20 miles a day with a 50-pound backpack as fun, but the walk across Missouri was as close to fun as I have experienced on this trip across the U.S.

The trail across the eastern half of Missouri follows the abandoned railroad known as the Katy Trail. It snakes west from St. Charles along the Missouri River, framed by high limestone bluffs on the north and the river or its lush bottomland on the south. The trail is paved with crushed stone, and, thanks to railroads’ aversion to hills, is absolutely flat. One could not imagine a more inviting walking surface.

The railroad spawned the development of many communities along its route, so I walked through dozens of little towns along the way -- towns with places to eat and sleep, unlike much of my journey. Missouri was settled by beer-loving Germans, so most of the eating places along the trail were small-town taverns. I visited a score of them during my two weeks there and found them to be friendly clubhouses where everybody congregated to gossip, eat, listen to bad music, and drink beer. Grandmothers, babies, grizzled farmers, bicyclists, and hikers all gathered at day’s end in the friendly, lively taverns along the trail. Most nights found me eating a cheeseburger, rehydrating with cold Budweiser, and listening to local history from the garrulous, friendly natives.

My wife has tried for years, with little success, to persuade me to stay in bed-and-breakfast inns. I never wanted to share a bathroom down the hall, and I recoiled at the prospect of sitting at the breakfast table with strangers, but on this walk across Missouri, B&Bs were often my only choice of accommodations. And miraculously, I enjoyed every one of them!

*(Continued on page 5, column 2)*

## Trail News



*Bob Feldman entertains Paul Daniel at the cabin dedication in Paul's honor.*

Photo courtesy of Patrick Hayes

### Ohio—A Place for Hikers

On Oct. 20 at Hueston Woods State Park, Dr. Paul Daniel and his wife Lois were on hand for the dedication ceremony of the Dr. Paul Daniel Volunteers Cabin located next to the bike rental office near Acton Lake. Paul was the first American Discovery Trail State Coordinator for Ohio and was instrumental in determining the ADT route through Ohio and Kentucky.

The Conestoga Cabin, a 14-feet by 17-feet, two room cabin with a six-foot porch, was purchased with a \$15000 grant from the Jerome Glazer Foundation and constructed by Hueston Woods Trail Crew chief Bob Feldman and his group of volunteers. The cabin is located next to the American Discovery Trail route as it passes through Hueston Woods State Park and will be used mainly by the mountain bike trail crew, but will also be available for use by ADT hikers. Since Bob's group couldn't receive the grant money directly, the American Discovery Trail Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, was asked to be the fiduciary agent for the grant money.

### Annual Winter Hike

Meet at Hueston Woods State Park Lodge on Monday, Jan. 21, 2008. The hike will start at 9 a.m. Arrive early for breakfast with other hikers at the lodge at 8 a.m. We will hike around Acton Lake, about 11 miles, on a variety of

trails. A bean soup and corn muffin lunch will be available at the park office next to the nature center. Donations are accepted.

For those wishing to hike only from the lodge to the nature center, a shuttle back to the lodge will be available. This is a free event. For more information contact Patrick Hayes at [patioh@woh.rr.com](mailto:patioh@woh.rr.com) or H (937) 962-4884; C (937) 307-2239.

### Colorado - Getting the Word Out

The Colorado state coordinating team has been busy promoting the ADT both formally and informally. Dick Bratton, state coordinator, is a member of various trail committees: the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, the Trails and Open Space Coalition, and the Pikes Peak Watershed Advisory Committee. By working cooperatively with other recreation and conservation groups, common goals are better achieved.

To make the ADT more noticeable for trail users and the general public, the team installed new trail markers in portions of the Front Range and western segments.

A very visible display of the ADT is the American Discovery Trail Marathon, now in its seventh year. Held each year on Labor

Day, the race is a qualifier for the Boston Marathon, and this year included over 900 runners from many states and countries. The entrants all start the race under a large banner with the ADT name and logo.

### Iowa – New Opportunities

A new trail is being designed along the length of the Mississippi River that will provide American Discovery Trail users even more opportunities to connect to various parts of the United States. The projected 3,000-plus-mile Mississippi River Trail will eventually extend from the river's beginning at Lake Itasca in Minnesota to the mouth of the river at the Gulf of Mexico. Along its way it will coincide with the ADT for about 33 miles between Davenport and Muscatine in Iowa.

The Iowa portion of the Mississippi River Trail will run along or near the river for its entire length. A special committee meets regularly to create awareness of the trail and encourage its development.

A recent bike ride was held to experience what has been developed, advise additional routing, and hold press conferences along the way.



*Runners ready to start the American Discovery Trail Marathon in Colorado Springs, Colo.*

Photo courtesy of American Discovery Trail Marathon

## Experiences along the Trail's Northern Midwest Leg

By Joyce & Peter Cottrell

*Joyce and Peter Cottrell were the first people to hike from coast to coast on the ADT official route, following the southern route. This spring they backpacked the northern Midwest leg, becoming the first to hike the entire trail.*

The inspiration to backpack the northern Midwest route of the ADT came from the spirit we carry from our previous coast-to-coast trip. Upon our announcement, the verbal reactions from so many were, "but it's on roads..." We can now answer, "but those roads can talk!"

In April, we stood excited in Elizabethtown, Ohio, at the very sign that directed us south in 2002. This time we headed north. For the next three-and-a-half months the farmlands and cattle, hog, and sheep ranches were the focus along the bike and canal trails and back roads of our country's heartland. We watched the many fields be turned over, fertilized, and planted, and then grow as we took steps west. We watched cows, sows, and ewes feed their newly born babes and viewed them growing, and then the mating cycle begin again, as we stepped west.

The physical work is so consuming. We saw the sweat; we saw the struggle to make machines work; and we saw the hours spent. As we slipped into the comfort of twilight in our tent, we saw the headlights of tractors and lights in barns. When we set out in the early morning, work was already in progress. Do they ever eat or sleep?

Tenting at a hog farm was quite a night. Every time the hog feeds, their feeder clicks – the hog is fattening up and that's money in the bank. We heard clicking all night! A bunkhouse was our home one night. The owners taught us the basics of cattle ranching. Their constant struggle with nature and weather is joined with their struggle with personal health and the economy. One Sunday in the middle of harvest, we sat at a church service and had a pot luck lunch with a community of wheat farmers. The dirty fingernails, blisters, and worn work clothes meant they had come directly from the fields, and the smiles of affection said it all. These stories continued through to Denver and we were humbled!

Fun was easy and simple. Laughing with the locals at the bars at so many ghost-like towns was something we looked forward to. Can you imagine drinking tea and wanting veggies for our dinners at these places?

A professional rodeo was a highlight. There we sat in hiking gear among folks in pointed cowboy boots and flashy clothes and hats. What a show! Being invited to sit on a lady's patio as we passed by was a relief. It was 100 degrees. She served us strawberry shortcake, cold drinks, and told us about her third-place dogs who rubbed elbows with Martha Stewart. How special is that?

The weather was a challenge for sure. The cold, sleety, and snowy days from Ohio through Indiana also brought endless wind. Iowa, Nebraska, and Colorado brought us heat that reached 110 degrees. It was all a "day on the trail." We had tans people pay for. Without our shoes on, our tan lines were so evident that people named us "White Feet."

A few disappointments were unexpected. A landmark lake had dried up from a twenty-mile length to a mere ten-miler. The Czech village bakery was closed. Pete's pack broke. Joyce suffered an infected heel blister.

Well, we turned it around. How? The remaining lake had the most beautiful tent site. The meat store and a farmer's market replaced the closed bakery. A "trail angel" got Pete's backpack fixed. An incredible hospital got Joyce back on the trail in a few days.

Discovery in the cities, on the trails, ghostly towns, and folks' homes was also simple and easy. Who would guess that some farmers still argue about rail trails? Who would know people are at high risk from still unsafe rail crossings? Who would know one piece of farm equipment costs more than we will ever see in a lifetime? Who has seen the great American white pelican? Who has felt the intense feelings from sculptures, literature, and paintings in a capital building or collections of our pioneers of the heartlands? One just needs to walk, look, and listen!

Our dream is to pass on to others the desire to discover. It is a beautiful country. Our adventures continue. Life gives us a short, undetermined number of years and

we are blessed with health and the will to walk. Thanks to the American Discovery Trail Society for an incredible trail. Let's hope the adventures from others continue as time goes on. We will support, encourage, and embrace all who enjoy the American Discovery Trail.

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## The Katy Trail

*(Continued from page 1)*

often find themselves with the river on one side and towering bluffs on the other. The trail travels through many types of landscapes including dense forests, wetlands, deep valleys, remnant prairies, open pastureland, and gently rolling farm fields. In the spring, the trail is brightened with flowering dogwood and redbud, while the fall is colored with the rich reds and oranges of sugar maple, sumac, and bittersweet.

With so many types of habitats, wildlife is abundant, especially birds. Chickadees, nuthatches, robins, orioles, and many types of woodpeckers are common. Red-tailed hawks and turkey vultures are often seen soaring above the trail, and bald eagles are common in the winter. Because of its location along the Missouri River flyway, migrating birds can be seen frequently. Watch for great blue herons, sandpipers, Canada geese, and belted kingfishers.

Katy Trail State Park also takes users through a slice of rural history as it meanders through the small towns that once thrived along the railroad corridor. From the area known as "Missouri's Rhineland," which portrays the heritage of the German migrants, to the historic town of Rocheport, which predates the Civil War, these towns reflect the rich heritage of Missouri. These communities make great places to stop and explore.

Although the scenery often changes, the trail remains fairly level and constant as it meanders through the countryside. Trailheads, which provide parking areas and other amenities, are located periodically along the trail. Many communities also offer services to trail users.

The section between St. Charles and Boonville has been designated as an official segment of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, and the entire trail is part of the American Discovery Trail.

## Hiker Updates

**Debbie Schachner** completed her three-year eastbound backpacking adventure at Cape Henlopen, Del., on Oct. 19. Debbie said, "My primary goal is to encourage people to do more with what we have." A second goal was to raise funds to build a library for a village in Kenya. Speaking to churches, service clubs, and other groups, she succeeded in raising \$47,000 for the first phase of the library.

**Mike and Crystal Davis**, with their dog, **Beaner**, finished their ten-month hiking and biking trip on October 25 in California. For the biking portions, Beaner rode in a pull-along trailer. Being outdoors for such an extended time gave Mike and Crystal an appreciation for nature. As they neared the end, they asked others to "go outside, take a deep breath of wonderful fresh fall air, thank God for the beauty that surrounds you, embrace those around you, and celebrate life with us!"

The British team of **David Toolen** and **Stuart Hamilton** walked westward across



*Debbie Schachner reaches the Atlantic.*

*Photo courtesy of Jim Shaner*

America over a two-year period generally following the ADT. They reached Limantour Beach at Point Reyes National Seashore on Nov. 2. Their plan was to learn about how Americans think by talking to people in cities, towns, and small villages (oh, and did we mention, pubs?) off the

beaten track. Stuart is writing a book on American's views of Europe and Europeans following the Sept. 11 attacks, and their online journals are laced with British humor.

Our other intrepid adventurers include: **Mike Daniel**, the "Lion King," is now along the Hennepin Canal Trail in Illinois. **Josh James** stopped in Canon City, Colo., at the end of October and plans to re-start in six months. **Jim Shaner**, who has persistently hiked over 825 miles on weekends or small trips over a 5-year period, was able to join Debbie Schachner for the last seven miles of her hike. **Jim Hopson** stopped in Missouri for the winter but you can read of some of his experiences along the Katy Trail in this issue. **Trey Crispen** attended the Junction Trail Fest in Milford, Ohio. He is staying in Cincinnati for the winter.

See the American Discovery Trail website for updates on all of these current and past long-distance ADT travelers along with links to their websites at [www.discoverytrail.org](http://www.discoverytrail.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!**

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: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Catching the Katy

(Continued from page 1)

Maybe I appreciated the company after walking for hours without talking to another person. Maybe this trip has distilled a lifetime of elitist ignorance out of me. I just know that the proprietors of B&Bs in Augusta, Rhineland, and Rocheport charmed me, fed me great breakfasts, and sent me back on the trail happy and eager to visit again.

The strangest place I stayed was a barracks next to the trail in Tebbetts. A benefactor has outfitted a big building with two dozen bunk beds and a shower to shelter Katy Trail bikers and hikers. I arrived ready to crash after a 27-mile day. The shelter was locked, so I wandered over to Jim's Bar & Grill across the street and learned that the keys to the shelter were hanging on a nail in a telephone pole nearby. I unlocked the door, dumped my gear, ate a pizza at Jim's, and returned to the shelter. But sleeping was more difficult than I had hoped because a biker and a couple of bowhunters had showed up. They kept me awake long into the night with a stentorian symphony of snoring and farting.

One surprising aspect of the walk across Missouri was the virtual absence of animal life. In every other state, I saw deer, skunks, turtles, lots of birds. Along the Katy Trail, I saw only a few snakes—skinny green snakes, big blacksnakes and one tiny (6 inches), but still-scary, rattlesnake. Maybe the towns and bottomland farms along the trail chased the critters to wilder terrain.

Halfway across the state I detoured to Columbia and met with people from the University of Missouri School of Journalism, from which I graduated back when God was a copyboy. I was worried that the Mizzou faculty is preparing journalists for the world as it used to be, not the world in which newspapers, magazines, and TV networks are losing market dominance to newer, faster media. I worried for nothing. It looks like the kids now coming out of Missouri's J-School will flourish in today's dynamic media environment.

I also talked to a couple of publishers along the way. Scott Jackson is publisher of the 2,600-circulation *Boonville Daily News*. He's a local boy, and he's been publisher since 1988. His circulation has remained steady and his ad revenue from local stores is growing despite the explosion of new re-

tailers in nearby Columbia. He's successfully using lavish coverage of local sports to attract the readership of young families.

I was attracted to a copy of the *Montgomery Standard* that I saw atop a bar in Rhineland because it must be the widest newspaper published in the U.S. I just read where Gannett is planning to shrink its web width again, to 44 inches. By contrast, the *Montgomery Standard* prints on a 62-inch web! My arms were just barely long enough to hold the paper fully open.

Owner and publisher John Fisher told me that his circulation, now about 3,500, has declined only 100 copies in the last 10 years. He said disciplined focus on local news, issues, and people has sustained the steady readership and prosperity of the *Standard* and its companion weekly, the *Wellsville Optic-News*. Although his advertising mix has changed over the years as Wal-Mart and shopping malls have gobbled up retail dollars, ad revenues continue to grow.

Fisher grew up in the newspaper business, but none of his children is interested in carrying on. He is concerned about the continuity of ownership when he finally decides to hang up his pica pole. But in the meantime, the ferociously independent Fisher and his newspapers continue to thrive and prosper.

West of Boonville the trail shifted to roads, over the course of the old Santa Fe Trail to Lexington. There an old fraternity brother picked me up and took me to his home to Kansas City, and the end of the journey for this season.

I'm making preparations to head to my place in Florida for the winter, where I can fatten up and plan for next summer's assault on the western half of the U.S.

*Jim Hopson is crossing the country on foot along the American Discovery Trail and visiting small newspapers along the way. He posted this journal at Poynter Online ([www.poynter.org](http://www.poynter.org)) on Oct. 9.*

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*Attending the October ADT Society Board of Directors meeting were (from left to right) Back row: Pat Hayes, Brian Stark, Laurie Foot, John Fazel, Dick Bratton, Eric Seaborg. Second row: Tom Neenan, Joyce Cottrell, Peter Cottrell, Mary Hayes, Reese Lukei, Ellen Dudley. Front row: Harv Hisgen, Ken Powers, Marcia Powers, John O'Dell, Susan Henley.*

### **ADTS Annual Meeting**

We all know that trails don't just magically happen. The American Discovery Trail project takes a lot of time, effort, and resources from numerous volunteers across the country. The annual membership and board meeting this October in Leesburg, Virginia was a prime example.

The meeting was an opportunity for renewing friendships as well as discussions on how to best promote, care for, and fund this im-

portant national resource. President Eric Seaborg reported that membership numbers are increasing, our budget is balanced, recognition of the trail is increasing, and we have a growing number of thru-hikers and trail users.

Challenges continue in pushing for the legislation that we need to endorse and protect this trail. Although we have managed to garner 17 co-sponsors, more are needed to help get this bill out of the committee level.

### **Attention Federal Employees**

Federal employees and U.S. Armed Forces members can designate the American Discovery Trail Society in their charitable pledge for the Combined Federal Campaign.

It's an easy way to give and contributions are tax-deductible. Simply include our new five-digit code when filling out your pledge card: **11245**.



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

