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On the Cover: Along the Great River Trail, Quad Cities
Photographer: Jesse Inskeep, Quad Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau

Features

4 **Trails save the world**

A vision of how trails and greenways will help move America in the right direction
By Robert Searns, American Trails Chair

8 **Trails training opportunities**

New training and resources hosted by the National Trails Training Partnership
Find training across the country with the online calendar at www.NTTP.net

10 **National Recreation Trails**

Thirty-six new National Recreation Trails are designated in 24 states
See photos and details at www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails

16 **Training for accessible trails**

Florida's state trails program sponsors a series of workshops on accessible trails
By Alexandra H. Weiss, Florida Office of Greenways & Trails

22 **Join us in the Quad Cities!**

Illinois and Iowa host the next National Trails Symposium October 19-22, 2006
Dozens of educational sessions, mobile workshops, and seminars on trails and greenways

30 **New Forest Service access rules**

USDA Forest Service publishes new guidelines and resources for accessible trails
By Janet Zeller, USDA Forest Service

32 **What's new with historic trails?**

America's national historic trails come in many shapes, sizes, and partnerships
By Steve Elkinton, Program Leader, National Trails System Program, National Park Service

34 **Top trail projects recognized**

Annual Achievement Awards announced by Coalition for Recreational Trails

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American Trails Magazine

American Trails Magazine (ISSN 1082-8303) is the magazine of American Trails, the nonprofit organization dedicated to quality trails and greenways within 15 minutes of every American home or workplace.

Editor: *Stuart H. Macdonald*

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Trail Tracks Editorial

Trails save the world!

By Robert Searns, American Trails Chair

“TRAILS SAVE THE WORLD!” That’s how the headline read in bold banner letters on the front page of the December 31, 2012 *Washington Post*. “Faced with \$25 per gallon gasoline,” the story went on to say, “the devastation of the second gulf coast mega-hurricane and flooding of low-lying coastal cities from the rising oceans, President Bartlett took immediate action to begin reversing the downward slide when she took office in 2009. Slowly, things are beginning to improve. She credited the ‘Trails for All Americans’ concept she saw on a website in 2006 as the tipping point in changing her thinking about how we live with our planet...”

Sound absurd? Maybe not, because something like this actually did happen when equally sinister threats reared more than two generations ago. It was the winter of 1933 and our nation faced its darkest hour since the Civil War. America was staggering from the 1929 stock market crash. Millions were out of work. People were losing their homes, farms, and businesses, and starvation for many was a real threat. A wave of bank failures and disgruntled young people on the streets threatened to worsen an already bad situation. Many, even respected pundits and business leaders, were eying fascism and communism as ways to manage the national emergency. In the thick of this, Franklin Roosevelt took the oath of office. Many urged him to seize dictatorial powers. (“Dictatorship” was not yet a bad word.)

Instead, FDR launched a series of never-before-tried programs to turn things around. One of these was the creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps (for more on the CCC, see the website www.cccalumni.org/history1.html). Initially, over a quarter million young men were offered employment on the nation’s vast public lands. They reforested denuded areas. They repaired eroding

Continued on page 38

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"Cool Trail Solutions" bring you more photos on trails topics

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED if your trail design and construction issues have already been met and creatively solved by others? Wouldn't it be great if you could go to a website, and with a few clicks find some ideas and answers?

The idea for "Cool Trail Solutions" came from discussions with Mark Weaver of the National Park Service RTCA program. He wanted to find a way to allow trails supporters to share more of their good ideas and solutions to the endless problems involved with trails and greenways. In particular, he felt there should be a way to get more photos online in a way that those illustrating particular topics could be easily found. We decided to take up Mark's challenge and together we made a start on the new website area.

Share your photos and information!

So far, we have a few sample photo galleries and links to a variety of good visual resources. We'd really like to see your ideas, too. If you have photos of facilities, structures, signs, or any "Cool Solutions" to trail-related problems, help us

share them with the worldwide trails community! Our goal is to enhance our resources for trails planning, development, and management with visual ideas from across the country. Nearly any topic that lends itself to visual presentation is of interest; trailhead facilities, signs, surfaces, bridges, interpretive displays, management issues from any kind of trail. We'd like to share solutions from parts of the world and from trail activities that others may not be familiar with.

You can access "Cool Trail Solutions" from the American Trails home page at www.AmericanTrails.org. Use the "Quick Jump" menu or click on the "Resources" icon and select "Cool Trail Solutions" under "Trails Spotlight." You'll also find instructions for sharing photos, or email us at trailhead@AmericanTrails.org.

Great photos of National Recreation Trails now online

OUR ANNUAL PHOTO CONTEST for designated National Recreation Trails is also online at www.AmericanTrails.org. You can view the 160 entries in this year's contest. If you have a favorite, let us know at NRT@AmericanTrails.org.

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American Trails offers training for a variety of trails skills

AMERICAN TRAILS IS STARTING TO OFFER these trainings and will bring them to your state:

- Understanding Accessibility and Building Better Trails Workshop
- Universal Trail Assessment Process (UTAP) Workshop
- TrailWare Workshop
- Trail Crew Leadership Training (in partnership with COTI)

These workshops are being developed, but will be ready to offer next year:

- Creating a State Trails Training Program (based on the Colorado Outdoor Training Initiative (COTI) model)
- Working with Developers Forum

Please call Pam Gluck at (530) 547-2060, for details and pricing for the workshops.



A class at Florida's state accessible trail design workshop

Join NTTP in making training for trails skills more available

Join US IN MAKING TRAINING MORE AVAILABLE to the nationwide trails community! The National Trails Training Partnership (NTTP) wants to work with agencies and trails organizations nationwide to make training more available.

The National Trails Training Partnership was formed by a wide variety of agencies and organizations nationwide to promote opportunities for trails activists to learn up-to-date techniques in trail planning, design, development, maintenance, accessibility, safety, volunteer management, and much more. For a complete list of NTTP Partners, visit www.americantrails.org/nttp/who.html.

The NTTP website, **www.NTTP.net**, offers thousands of resources, ranging from articles on trail building to an online searchable calendar of training events nationwide. Hosted by AmericanTrails.org, these combined sites receive over 100,000 visitors per month. We invite you to include a link to www.NTTP.net on your website, or to download from our website a logo ad or article to add to your website or to run in your next publication.

Please provide us your calendar items, articles, publications, and photos so we can share them with the trails community and help you promote your programs, projects, and trainings. We are also looking for trails experts that can offer trainings.

National Recreation and Park Association meets for training

THE NEXT NRPA NATIONAL CONFERENCE will be held in Seattle, Washington, October 10-14, 2006. For more than 40 years the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has brought together professionals, citizen advocates, educators and students who are passionate about parks and recreation. Join thousands of these supporters and industry vendors for NRPA's Annual Congress & Exposition.

For more information visit www.nrpa.org.

For classes, conferences, and hundreds of resources visit the NTTP online training calendar at www.NTTP.net

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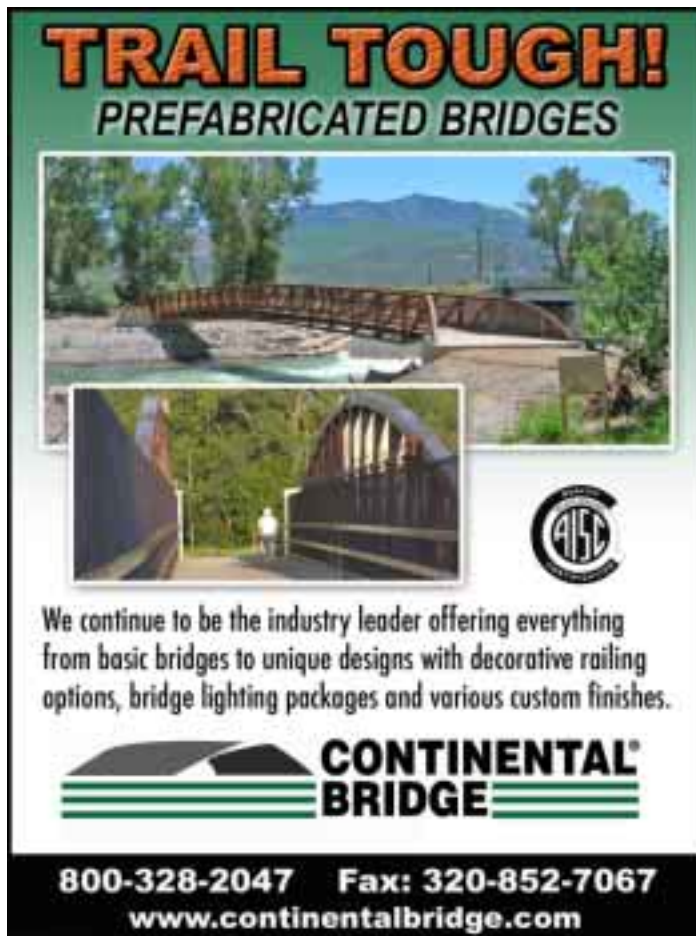
GET CREATIVE! That's the advice that successful trails activists invariably give. Finding funds for trails and conservation projects is the ultimate creative challenge. Here are some successful examples of trail and greenway funding from across the nation.

\$ Trails for peace: in Northern Ireland, a new trail design and construction program will be starting work in 2006. The funder is the **EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation** in Northern Ireland and the Border Regions of Ireland. Its main aim is to "promote reconciliation and help to build a more peaceful and stable society."

\$ The **Appalachian Trail Conservancy** will receive \$20 per plate from a special **North Carolina license plate** to support affiliated clubs in the state with training, tools, volunteer support, and other trail management. ATC member Clark Wright initiated the project and worked tirelessly with then-State Senator Joe Sam Queen to shepherd it through the legislature and the Division of Motor Vehicles.

\$ In the last five years the **Washington Trails Association** has received over \$100,000 through **payroll deductions**. Workplace giving allows employees to donate to charitable organizations through payroll pledges. These payroll pledges enable WTA to spend less time fundraising and more time working toward a healthier trail system. WTA is a member of **Earth Share of Washington**, an alliance of 65 leading conservation and environmental organizations.

\$ Lincoln National Forest in southeastern New Mexico has a great partner in the **NM Rails-to-Trails Association** (NMRTA). Besides volunteering thousands of hours in maintaining national forest trails, the group has received over \$180,000 in grants. NMRTA has also received \$10,000 from the Marion Hakey estate, \$5,000 from the **Jerry and Patricia Johnson Foundation**, and over \$12,000 in services from other groups and individuals. The Johnson Foundation recently endowed NMRTA ensuring they will continue to be a positive force for trails for years to come.



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Funding ideas from the trails

\$ Purgatory at Durango Mountain Resort funded **Trails 2000** as the 2005 Benefit Day recipient to receive all proceeds from the Colorado ski area's annual pre-opening event. Trails 2000 supports southwest Colorado community trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding, and making trails accessible for all people from children to seniors. The funds were used to help lease a new trail machine to help maintain and construct paths that are user friendly, sustainable, and environmentally sensitive.

\$ Planet Bike markets bicycle products and believes in the "potential of the bicycle to help improve the world and the lives of the people in it." To further that goal, Planet Bike pledged \$100,000 of support to the **Thunderhead Alliance** in 2006. Thunderhead is a national coalition of bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations working in unison to break down the barriers to safe bicycling and walking.

\$ The "All-Aboard for the Boardwalk" fundraising campaign for Millbrook Marsh Nature Center was started to fund boardwalk and trail system development. Individuals were invited to purchase one or more boards. With funding for materials in place, a project grant from the **Pennsylvania Conservation Corps** provided a work crew to assist maintenance staff and dedicated volunteers with the in-house construction of the boardwalk.

\$ Trips for Kids Metro DC offers rides for kids in DC's Fort Dupont Park, as well as bike training and health programs. **Franklin's**, a truly funky restaurant, brew pub and general store in Hyattsville, MD, donated 20% of the proceeds from customers who mentioned Trips for Kids on July 11. TFK also held a Benefit Concert Night July 26 at **music club DC9**.

\$ A national effort to restore trails in National Parks was supported by the **National Park Foundation (NPF)**, **Student Conservation Association (SCA)**, and a \$150,000 grant from **Nature Valley Granola Bars®**. Funds will help restore trails in National Capital Parks (DC), Grand Teton National Park, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and the Blue Ridge Parkway. The National Parks Trails Restoration Program is part of Nature Valley's ongoing partnership with the NPF. Trail crews of high school and college-aged students from across the United States were trained, and coordinated by the Student Conservation Association.

\$ Bill Bliss (1935-2005) was a well-known bicycle activist and one of the founders of the **San Francisco Bay Trail**. To honor his life, a memorial donations account was set up in Mr. Bliss' name to help support the development of the San Francisco Bay Trail. Visit www.baytrail.org or write to P O Box 2050, Oakland CA 94604.

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New National Recreation Trails



Secretary Kempthorne Announces Designation of 36 New National Recreation Trails in 24 States

On June 1, **Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne** designated 36 National Recreation Trails for 2006. "The new trails joining the National

Trail System illustrate the diversity of the country's pathways," Kempthorne said. They join a network of more than 900 trails encompassing more than 10,000 miles.

The announcement coincided with the 14th annual celebration of National Trails Day on June 3, 2006, which encouraged people to use trails for exercise and exploration. More than 1,100 locally organized activities took place throughout all 50 states.

The National Recreation Trails Program is jointly administered by the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program and the U.S. Forest Service in conjunction with a number of other federal and nonprofit partners, notably American Trails, which hosts the National Recreation Trail website at

www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails.



Fort Mandan Nature & History Trail, North Dakota



Historic Union Pacific Rail Trail, Utah

Secretary Kempthorne designated the following 36 trails as National Recreation Trails:

Alaska

- **Bird to Gird Pathway** is a 13-mile scenic rail-trail connecting the communities of Girdwood, Bird, and Indian, and offers views of the ocean, mountains, and glaciers.
- **St. Paul Island High Bluffs Trail** in the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge takes visitors through a landscape of coastal cliffs, rolling tundra, and windswept beaches.

Arkansas

- **Josh Park Memorial Trail** at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' scenic Greers Ferry Lake, offers an array of experiences for hikers, runners, bicyclists, and nature enthusiasts.

California

- **Mountains to Sea Trail** is a 22-mile urban nature reserve and bikeway from Weir Canyon through the diversity of the 50,000-acre Irvine Ranch Land Reserve.

DC, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia

- **Potomac River Water Trail** traverses over 300 miles, offering diverse experiences and exciting opportunities to view the varied landscapes and rich history of the Potomac River.

Illinois

- **Sam Vadalabene Great River Road Bike Trail** is one of the oldest trails in St. Louis and a key connector, running 21.5 scenic miles along the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers.

Iowa

- **Raccoon River Valley Trail:** This 56-mile rail-trail is the backbone of the Central Iowa Trails Plan, offering recreational opportunities to more than half a million people.

Maine

- **The Carson Trail** in the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge is an interpretive trail and greenway traversing three natural habitats with wildlife viewing opportunities.

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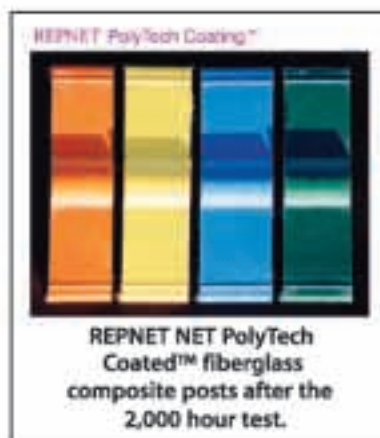
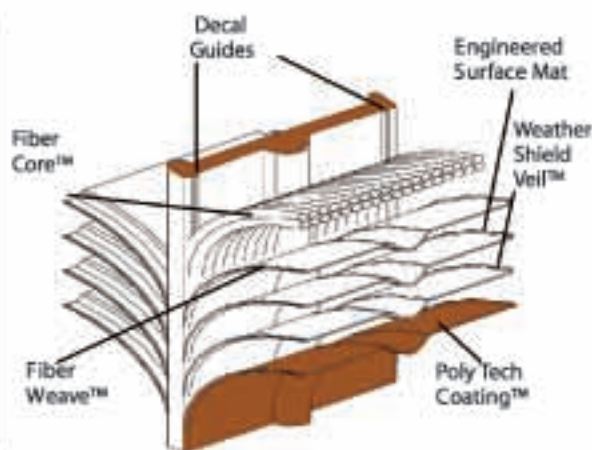
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Milwaukee Urban Water Trail, Wisconsin

Maryland

- **Sligo Creek Parkway Trail** – This popular 10.2-mile urban trail/bikeway connects Prince George's and Montgomery Counties for recreation, education, and transportation.

Michigan

- **Paint Creek Trail**, the first rail-trail in Michigan, is part of the extensive Oakland Trail Network and follows the Paint Creek as it flows through diverse natural habitats.

Missouri

- **Frisco Highline Trail**, the second longest rail-trail in Missouri, connects towns from Springfield to Bolivar and provides close-to-home opportunities for walking and riding.
- **Smithville Lake Trail** near Kansas City is a 20-mile multi-use trail providing a natural haven where visitors can enjoy an array of recreational activities.

New Hampshire

- **Little Cherry Pond** in the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge is a backcountry and birding trail through six different forest communities.

New York

- **Cunningham Park Southeast Preserve Trail** traverses one of the most undisturbed natural areas in New York City, preserving oaks, native wildflowers, dogwood, and ferns.
- **Genesee Riverway Trail** is a 15-mile urban trail through the scenic, historic, and cultural heart of Rochester, linking parks, historic districts, and waterfalls.
- **Hudson River School Art Trail** is a historic theme trail network comprised of seven sites linking the home of Thomas

Cole, founder of the Hudson River School, with painting sites that inspired many 19th Century artists.

- **Hyde Park Heritage Greenway Trail System** runs 14 miles from downtown Hyde Park through neighborhoods, four National Park sites, town parks, and a nature preserve.

North Carolina

- **W. Kerr Scott Trails**: This nine-mile multi-use trail connects recreational facilities at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reservoir and along the Yadkin River Greenway.
- **House Creek Greenway** is a vital link in the State's greenway system and features the Reedy Creek Pedestrian Bridge, the longest trail bridge in North Carolina.
- **Mountains-to-Sea Trail - Falls Lake South Shore**: This 26-mile scenic hiking trail is part of a larger trail system that will eventually connect 37 counties on the east coast.



Washburn Discovery Trail, North Dakota

North Dakota

- **Fort Mandan Nature & History Trail** at the replica of Fort Mandan (Lewis and Clark's wintering post in 1804-1805) offers wildlife viewing along the Missouri River.
- **Washburn Discovery Trail** is a 2.2-mile multi-use trail connecting parks with the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and providing scenic vistas of the Missouri River.

Oklahoma

- **Centennial Trail** in Washita National Wildlife Refuge loops through a variety of diverse habitats and allows visitors to observe numerous plant and animal species.
- **Eagle Roost Nature Trail** in Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge is an interpretive nature trail loop that provides opportunities to view bald eagles, whooping cranes, and a variety of waterfowl.

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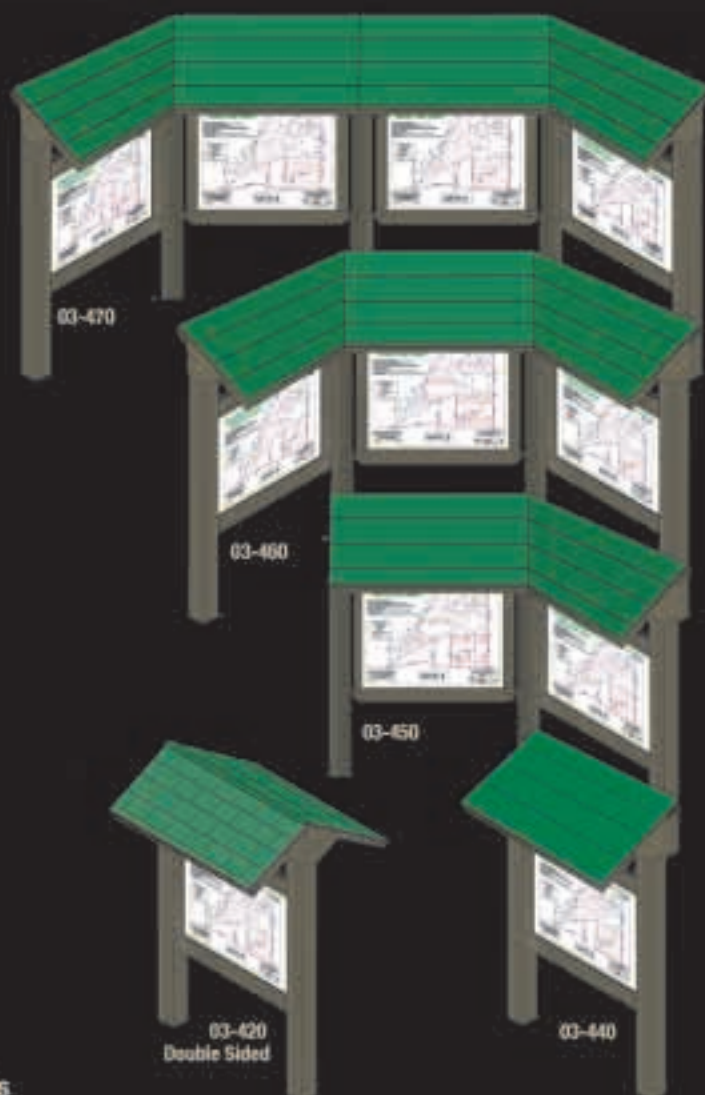
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New National Recreation Trails *continued*



Deckers Creek Trail, West Virginia

Oregon

- **Ankeny Rail Trail** in Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge runs through a seasonally flooded Oregon ash wetland where wildlife and birds can be seen and heard year round.
- **Ridgeline Trail** is a 14-mile urban trail and bikeway near downtown Eugene that features Spencer Butte, the highest and most prominent landmark in the area.

Pennsylvania

- **Mahoning Shadow Trail** is a 15-mile rail-trail along Mahoning Creek in Jefferson County that preserves historic coke ovens and a variety of flora and fauna.

Tennessee

- **Tennessee River Blueway** is a 50-mile scenic water trail through diverse natural environments, culture, and history, and connects to Chattanooga's renowned greenways system.

Texas

- **San Gabriel River Trails** follows Georgetown's scenic North and South San Gabriel Rivers, featuring natural springs, wetlands, and a star gazing and bird watching area.

Utah

- **Gooseberry Mesa Trail** is a 13.5-mile Bureau of Land Management mountain bike trail offering a 360-degree view of spectacular landmarks in the Zion National Park area.
- **Historic Union Pacific Rail Trail** runs 28 miles from the Wasatch Mountains near Park City through wetland meadows in Silver Creek Canyon.

Virginia

- **Bull Run - Occoquan Trail** is an 18-mile hiking and equestrian trail through 5,000 acres of Occoquan shoreline parklands and habitat for a profusion of birds and wildlife.

Washington

- **Pine Lake Loop Trail** in Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge offers an array of opportunities to view 26 species of waterfowl, in addition to moose, elk, and other wildlife.

West Virginia

- **Mon River/Caperton/Deckers Creek Trails** form a 46-mile rail-trail system through three counties for recreation, transportation, community green space, and outdoor classrooms.

Wisconsin

- **Jacobus Park Nature Trail** is a 0.9-mile hiking and biking loop trail through a woodland island in Metropolitan Milwaukee and provides a unique natural outdoor classroom.
- **Milwaukee Urban Water Trail** is a 35-mile water trail flows through the urban Milwaukee area, providing miles of access and paddling to the 1.5 million people.

For more information on these and other NRTs see www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails.

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and got as tough as nails
The crew were kids except for me
fed food and my tall tales

We pounded rock and cut a path
out there in Nature's glory
As stock kicked out our water bars
we fashioned quite a story

October storms were coming in
as we raced to finish up
Each afternoon the clouds would grow
they threatened to disrupt

Our best laid get-out plans
see, the mountain doesn't care
It warns you like a rattler's tail
a force that tends to scare

Get out right now flatlanders
or you're in big trouble sure
But we wanted strong to finish
and we surely could endure

A little early touch of snow
since we were seasoned now
But when it hit it buried all
brought furrow to my brow

Grab what we could and hit the trail
if we could find our way on down
Sticking close would help us all
t'was a damn long way to town

A good dozen miles with heavy packs
now you'll hear my tale of woe
I went back to grab my briefcase
all those papers, don't you know

Well my loyal crew just left me
as the White Out covered tracks
A shortcut over slippery cliffs
laugh on, I'm telling facts

I cursed them as I trudged
my anger covered fear
Would the mountain claim a victim?
melodrama hovered near

I can still recall the moment
as I came up o'er a rise
And saw ahead a smallish break
I'd deny Mom Nature's prize

My guys musta' heard me coming
'cause they huddled closer still
But they'd know my ire fully
fiery eyes they thought could kill

Well, the story wasn't over
we had a ways to go
Two underpowered vehicles
in over a foot of snow

We scratched our heads in worry
when a minor miracle appeared
The last trip of the snow plow
would help with what we feared

We could follow close behind
tho' my truck had just one chain
The hippie van slipped off the road
can you say "that's insane"?

Well somehow we survived
tho' trailbuilding can turn dark
Adventures on the edge for us
but stories with a spark

Nature runs the show up there
we found that out next spring
An avalanche pushed trees uphill
surprises more to bring

Cause our trail now was buried
ten feet below downed trees
Big job to clear without chain saws
workin' Wilderness ain't no breeze

Well the Forest had a plan
volunteers would save the day
Damned if chain saws weren't approved
else you and I would pay

When all is said, my friends
these were Nature's times
She's harsh but ever bounteous
even yielding to my rhymes.



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Training for accessible trails

Florida's state trails program sponsors a series of workshops to help build trails that are more accessible

By Alexandra H. Weiss, Office of Greenways & Trails
Florida Department of Environmental Protection

AS WE ALL KNOW, ACCESSIBILITY for trail users is important. Interpreting the various laws related to this issue can be confusing. Putting the information to practical use can be daunting. The education opportunity we offer is designed to assist agencies in addressing these issues—thus making Florida's recreational trails safer and more accessible to all users.

The Universal Trail Assessment Process training introduces participants to recreational trail accessibility issues. Participants learn how to map trails as to cross-slope, grade, obstacles, and trail width, as well as how to use all this new-found information. UTAP is not only a great accessibility assessment tool, but a management tool. In addition, participants learn how trail sustainability and accessibility are interrelated.

The Office of Greenways & Trails, through the Recreational Trails Program, pays for the training. All RTP project sponsors are invited to participate. The administrative funds cover the cost of both the UTAP tool kits and the TrailWare computer programs which are sent home with each project sponsor at the completion of the UTAP Coordinator Training.

Florida offers two types of training: the full UTAP coordinator workshop with TrailWare training; and the one day "Understanding Accessibility and Building Better Trails" workshop.

RTP Grant Implementation (GIMP) Workshop participants receive the one day training. The project liaisons are introduced to trail sustainability and accessibility in an informative indoor and outdoor setting. The GIMP workshop provides participants with an introduction to the topic and discussion of why trail sustainability and accessibility can coexist as well as the importance of providing objective trail information to recreational trail users and trail managers.

The two and one-half day UTAP training is the more intense training. In addition to classroom work, the program involves on-the-ground, on-the-trail experiences. On the third day, participants spend a half day learning and using the TrailWare software program associated with UTAP.

We currently conduct two UTAP Coordinator sessions per year. In this way, both the new project sponsors as well as past sponsors participate. And, eventually, we'll get caught up and just do one per year for the new sponsors.

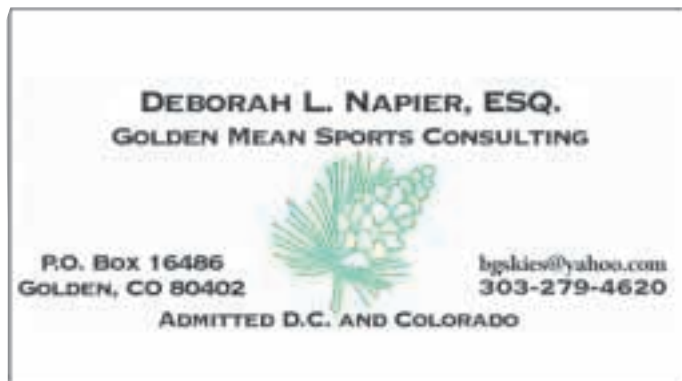
Florida now requires that project sponsors assess their RTP projects

and submit the information to the Office of Greenways & Trails. The idea is that whoever participates in the training returns to their sites and uses the information. UTAP is designed to assist agencies in addressing trails accessibility issues and thereby improving the recreational trails experience for all visitors.

Visit www.floridagreenwaysandtrails.com for more on Florida trails. The Trail Explorer website is at www.trailexplorer.com. For more information on the Accessible Trails workshops from American Trails please visit www.AmericanTrails.org.



Mike Passo discussing trail surfacing (photo by Karen Shudes, Office of Greenways & Trails)



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The Mississippi River Trail

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE CONNECTIONS



3,000-mile trail route planned along the Mississippi River

By Terry Eastin

Executive Director, Mississippi River Trail, Inc.

COURSING ALONG AMERICA'S SECOND longest river, the Mississippi River Trail (MRT) winds its way from the headwaters near Itasca, Minnesota, to the Gulf of Mexico, connecting the wilds of Minnesota to the depths of the emerald green Gulf of Mexico. A 3,000-mile system of bicycle-friendly roads and multi-use pathways, the Mississippi River Trail is a "string of pearls" connecting ten states, the cities of Minneapolis, St. Louis, Memphis, New Orleans, and hundreds of smaller towns. The MRT is a unique way to experience the Mississippi River's natural wonders, transportation system, recreational facilities, and cultural heritage.

The experience begins in Lake Itasca State Park along paved trails in Minnesota's North Woods, and ends at the Gulf of Mexico. In many sections of the route, the MRT follows highways through distinctive scenes of America's heartland: dramatic bluffs, small villages, rolling farmland, wooded landscapes, and the historic downtowns of river cities. When the MRT reaches the Quad Cities, it becomes part of RiverWay. Nearly 100 miles of trails on both sides of the Mississippi connect natural areas with the communities.

Forever connections are made on the Mississippi River Trail. Because of the MRT, river towns have redeveloped their waterfronts with public spaces that residents and visitors from around the world can enjoy. Trails designed for multi-use recreation and transportation tie these waterfront spaces together. The Mississippi River forms the backbone of this

3,000-mile network of communities and connecting trails. Like modern day Huck Finns, children can grow up playing along the MRT and dream of someday riding it from the Headwaters to the Gulf. Like jazz, the blues, and the great Mississippi itself, the MRT is part of the heart and soul of America.

At the National Trails Symposium in the Quad Cities on October 19, Mississippi River Trail, Inc. will host a pivotal one-day workshop that will provide an opportunity for cyclists, planners, trail enthusiasts, and federal and state agency representatives to help plot the future course and strategic management of the Mississippi River Trail. There is no charge for this "Paintin' the Fence" workshop. A key sponsor has generously donated lunch. Join us and become part of history as it is created. It's all about connections!

For more information, please visit the MRT website at www.mississippirivertrail.org or call Terry Eastin, Executive Director at (479) 236-0938. Please consider joining or making a tax deductible contribution!

An advertisement for Riverwise, Inc. The top half features a large map of the Mississippi River Trail, showing the river's path from Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico. Below the map is a sign for Winona, Minnesota, which includes a map of the city and text about the river. The bottom half of the advertisement contains the text "We create functional and attractive interpretive signs and maps" and two smaller maps: "Great River Birding Trail" and "Mississippi River Trail". The Riverwise, Inc. logo and contact information are at the bottom right.

We create functional and attractive interpretive signs and maps

Riverwise, Inc.
(800) 303-8201
www.riverwise.com

Calendar

Mississippi River Trail will hold reception at the Skybridge

ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., trail on over to the glassed-in Davenport Skybridge for a taste of the Mississippi River Trail (MRT)! Join board members, friends, Symposium attendees and special guests as we eat, drink, and enjoy exhibits from Lake Itasca all the way to the Gulf of Mexico!

Take the ten state challenge: sample wares and fares from the delta to the headwaters! Put on your party dress in New Orleans, grab some Mardi Gras beads, get "lost" in Arkansas' Big Woods, and kick up your heels to the Memphis Blues! Scale the St. Louis Arch or hit the slots in the Quad Cities Isle of Capri. Leap over Minneapolis' Stone Arch Bridge and wind up in Minnesota's northern heartland where Ojibwa Indians harvest wild rice by hand!

This is a don't miss event! For more information check out www.mississippirivertrail.org.

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Connections!*



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River Trail*

Join us at the

National Trails Symposium

as we continue building a premiere
trail system along the Mississippi River
from the headwaters to the Gulf.

MRT "Paint the Fence" Workshop

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

October 19th

REGISTRATION REQUIRED!

No cost - lunch provided

"A Taste of the Mississippi River Trail"

Davenport Skybridge Reception

5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

October 18th

www.mississippirivertrail.org



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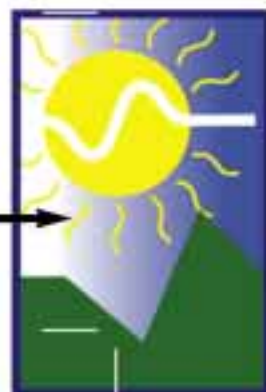
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2006 National Trails Symposium

Join us in the Quad Cities!

Top Ten Reasons To Participate

1. Help make "Trails for America: Every Where, Every Way, Every Day" a reality!
2. So much to see and do, it takes four cities and two states to hold it all!
3. Midwest hospitality.
4. A Keynote Speaker (Gil Penalosa) who led the closure of 50+ miles of roads to cars every Sunday, where now over 1.5 million people walk, run, skate, and bike!
5. Over 60 cutting-edge presentations.
6. Exhibits, field trips and hands-on workshops.
7. Discover new ways to develop, promote and sell the importance of trails in your community.
8. The largest exhibit hall ever, with over 100 booths and a greenway with trails running through it!
9. Network with trails enthusiasts from around the country and the world!
10. A Riverboat cruise on the Mississippi River!



Keynote speaker Gil Penalosa

Closing Keynote ~ Gil Penalosa

AT THIS YEAR'S SYMPOSIUM you can learn how Gil Penalosa, President of Walk and Bike for Life in Ontario, Canada, inspired over a million people to walk, run, bike, skate, and people-watch in Bogota, Colombia with the Ciclovía weekly event. Gil is a passionate global thinker and believes trails are great equalizers, where every person has a sense of belonging, of being "equal" as a human being, and everyone goes to the trails regardless of gender, age, and economic, social, or ethnic background.

For more information on Gil Penalosa, visit
www.americantrails.org/quad/gilpenalosa.html.

Online Registration

ONLINE REGISTRATION FOR THE SYMPOSIUM is now available! You can register online at www.regonline.com/nts06. Acceptable online payments are credit cards (Visa and MasterCard only), checks and purchase orders. You can also mail or fax in your registration forms, which can be found in the Registration Booklet. Contact the American Trails office at (530) 547-2060 or symposium@americantrails.org to get a copy of the booklet.

Concurrent Sessions

WE INVITE YOU TO CHOOSE from 50 educational sessions and 8 mini-workshops within our theme "Trails for America: Every Where, Every Way, Every Day." These sessions will help participants understand how trails are "...connecting us to ourselves, to each other, to the land, to our shared histories and cultures..." Discover trail opportunities, plans, designs, and operations across North America and beyond. Examine the many ways to design, develop, finance, manage and operate trails used on foot or snowshoe, road bicycle or mountain bike, on a horse or in a boat, by snowmobile or all-terrain vehicle, whether for recreation, transportation, physical activity, or mental health.

No matter the season, no matter the reason, consider ways to insure that good trail ethics and etiquette are a part of everyday use, and view trails as part of a larger transportation network that affords an alternative way to travel on a day-to-day basis. Whether sharing a short stroll around the neighborhood on a creatively developed and managed trail system or a longer experience along the Mississippi River or American Discovery Trail, these sessions reveal the knowledge that will help us to continue to advance "Trails for America."

For detailed information, times and locations on all the concurrent sessions and mini-workshops, visit
www.americantrails.org/quad/concurrent.html.

National Trails Symposium, October 19-22, 2006

For details visit www.AmericanTrails.org

2006 National Trails Symposium

Symposium Programs

Workshops

WE'VE PLANNED MANY OPPORTUNITIES for attendees to enjoy the outdoors, the Quad Cities, and the surrounding region. Come early and join us for special training workshops and fun and educational field trips before the main conference begins.

Featured Workshops

Think about immersing yourself in at least one of the featured workshops being offered in the Quad Cities:

Tuesday, October 17 & Wednesday, October 18

- Universal Trail Assessment Process (UTAP) Coordinator Workshop - \$345.00

Thursday, October 19

- Understanding Accessibility and Building Better Trails - \$99.00
- Risk & Trails Workshop - \$89.00
- Become a Tread Lightly! Tread Trainer - \$50.00
- Mississippi River Trail "Paint the Fence" Workshop – No fee, pre-registration required

Saturday, October 21

- Horse Trails Caucus – No fee, pre-registration required
- TrailWare: UTAP Data Management Software Course - \$145.00

These featured workshops will not only keep you up-to-date in the latest trails techniques in trail design or construction, but will also give you the opportunity to network with your peers in the trails world.

For more detailed information on the featured workshops, including dates and times, visit

www.americantrails.org/quad/featured.html.

Mobile Workshops

Visit the great Quad Cities area trail projects on a variety of mobile workshops. There are 16 great educational trips to choose from, and we can guarantee all of them will teach the necessary components and skills that you can apply to your trail-related project. Space is limited so sign up now!

You can read more detailed information on each mobile workshop online at

www.americantrails.org/quad/mobile.html.



Attend the 2006 National Trails Symposium in the Quad Cities

• October 19-22, 2006 •

Join America's leading greenways and trails enthusiasts, advocates, and professionals in the Quad Cities for the 2006 National Trails Symposium.

The National Trails Symposium is held every other year at different locations throughout the U.S. Learn from cutting edge educational sessions delivered by respected national experts, mobile workshops, exhibits, recreational opportunities and more. The Symposium provides an opportunity for greenways and trail advocates, managers, planners, users, and outdoor product providers, as well as conservationists, and

private landowners to come together to communicate and participate in a national conference that addresses both non-motorized and motorized trail issues.

The Quad Cities is located on the Mississippi River and is made up of the cities of Davenport and Bettendorf in Iowa, and Moline/East Moline and Rock Island in Illinois. The area is a 2 1/2 hour drive from Chicago, Illinois and is easily accessible via I-80, I-74, I-88 and several major state highways. The area is also served by the Quad City International Airport (MLI) in Moline, Illinois.

For registration and symposium info go to
www.americantrails.org

For info on the Quad Cities go to
www.visitquadcities.com



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2006 National Trails Symposium

More Symposium activities

Trail Tools Expo

COME JOIN US AT THE **Trail Tools ~ Part 1: Equipment Expo** at Centennial Park in Davenport on Thursday, October 19, from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Vendors will demonstrate equipment, tools, and materials used in the construction, maintenance, and signing of trails at this popular offsite field trip. Following the Equipment Expo, vendors will have the opportunity to showcase their products at the conference site, and to discuss their products with interested Symposium participants. The Equipment Expo is designed to move one step further and allow vendors to actually show Trail Tools at work! And, attendees will be able to test-drive equipment. Exhibits will include trail-building machines, excavators, motorized wheelbarrows, tools, and lots of things in between! Participants may also have an opportunity to “test” other items such as bicycles, ATVs, etc. The site has a dirt surface. Cost is \$20.00 and does not include lunch.

Trail Tools Part 2: John Deere Equipment Expo



For even more fun in the dirt, come to **Trail Tools ~ Part 2: John Deere Equipment Expo** at the Coal Valley Demonstration Site in Moline on Thursday, October 19, from 12:00 Noon to 4:00 p.m. John Deere is a major sponsor of the Symposium, and at no charge you can view their huge selection of Deere construction and forestry equipment, and have the unique opportunity to ride and try large pieces of John Deere equipment for yourself. Lunch will be provided by John Deere.

To see all of the great trail-related products that John Deere offers, please visit their website at www.johndeere.com.



Hotels at the Symposium

HOTEL ROOMS ARE STILL AVAILABLE at the Clarion in Davenport and John Deere Commons – Radisson in Moline (this is NOT the Radisson that is connected to the RiverCenter). Both of these hotels will provide a courtesy shuttle to and from the Convention Center. The John Deere Commons – Radisson is near the trails and among nice restaurants. Rates range between \$74 and \$99 per day (plus tax).

Make your reservations early as rooms at these rates are limited and going fast! These three hotels are FULL: Radisson Quad City Plaza, Four Points Sheraton in Rock Island and Stoney Creek Inn in Moline.

For hotel information, see the Accommodations page at www.americantrails.org/quad/hotels.html.

Visit the Exhibit Hall

AT THIS YEAR'S SYMPOSIUM, the Exhibit Hall will be designed as a trail & greenway system. The Mississippi River Trail and the American Discovery Trail will cross the Exhibit Hall and meet in the middle. As a special treat, a 42-foot diameter Labyrinth will be displayed that attendees can walk through.

Nearly 100 exhibitors will showcase their products and services. There still is room available for any exhibitors wishing to get in on the action. Contact the American Trails office at (530) 547-2060 or symposium@americantrails.org to obtain an exhibitor packet or if you have any questions.



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You do not have to be present to win.

Learn more about the National Trails Symposium and American Trails: www.americantrails.org.
Learn more about the Quad Cities: www.visitquadcities.com.

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2006 National Trails Symposium

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- American Discovery Trail Society
- American Hiking Society
- Back Country Horsemen of America
- Carroll Co. Economic Development Corp.
- Cedar Rapids Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
- City of Cedar Falls Tourism & Visitors Bureau

- Dickinson County Trails Board
- East Coast Greenway Alliance
- Equestrian Land Conservation Resource
- Great River Trail
- Henry County Tourism Bureau / Geneseo Chamber of Commerce
- Illinois Trail Riders
- Illinois Trails Conservancy
- Iowa Bicycle Coalition
- Iowa Horse Council
- Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
- Iowa Trails Council
- Keep Scott County Beautiful
- League of Illinois Bicyclists
- Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics
- Mississippi River Parkway Commission
- National Center on Accessibility
- National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council
- National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse
- Nez Perce National Historic Trail
- North Country Trail Association
- Quad Cities: Midwest Arts Mecca
- Quad City Bicycle Club
- Quad-City Labyrinth
- Raccoon River Valley Trail Association
- Riverwise Publishing, Inc.
- Roscoe Bridge
- Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area
- Take Pride in America
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A letter from the Chair

Dear Friend,

Your membership helps us continue important project work and enables us to provide you extensive technical assistance through our vast website featuring thousands of resources and publications. We know we are providing a needed service for the trails community, as we have over 100,000 visitors per month!

However, a huge number of these visitors are benefiting from all of

our research and the maintenance of our extensive website— and not providing funding in the form of a membership or donation to support our important work.

Please help us continue to serve you. If you are currently a member, please consider renewing at a higher level. If you aren't a member, won't you please join today? You can either use the form below or join online at: AmericanTrailsStore.org.

Take action now and help improve the health of Americans today, and for future generations. Won't you please help us continue to serve the needs of the trails community?

Sincerely,

Bob Searns, Chair
American Trails

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_____ **Affiliate Organization (Nonprofit/Volunteer Groups) \$50 or more**

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Receive 3 copies of *American Trails Magazine* for 1 year, discount on National Trails Symposium registrations for 3 people, and organization name listing in *American Trails Magazine* and on the American Trails website.

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Accessible trails policy updated by USDA Forest Service

THE USDA FOREST SERVICE IS WORKING TO better integrate accessibility into the outdoor recreation environment. An important goal is to provide trails that maximize accessibility while protecting the natural setting and experience of each trail.

Two policy manuals for the agency have been updated to guide facility development for the agency. The *Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines* (FSORAG) applies to outdoor recreation areas and structures not covered under existing accessibility guidelines. These include new or altered campsites, picnic areas, overlooks, the routes connecting those facilities, and beach access routes. The *Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines* (FSTAG) provide guidance to ensure that new or altered trails with a designed use of hiker/pedestrian are developed to maximize accessibility for all people.

On May 22, 2006, the notices of the final amendments to the Forest Service Manuals 2330 and 2350 were published in the Federal Register. This makes the FSORAG and FSTAG both now final for use in the National Forest System, which includes the 175 National Forests and Grasslands and 192 million acres of outdoor recreation opportunities.

See www.AmericanTrails.org for more information on Accessible Trails, including the full text of the new Forest Service accessibility documents and links to many articles and resources.

Accessibility Guidebook covers outdoor recreation and trails

THE FOREST SERVICE HAS RELEASED THE NEW *Accessibility Guidebook on Outdoor Recreation and Trails*. It's designed to be a user-friendly guide to integrating accessibility in the outdoor recreation environment while maintaining the natural settings.

The Guidebook is full of photos, illustrations, design tips, links, and valuable side-bar information to help Forest Service personnel, as well as the agency's partners, contractors, and Federal and State agencies working in cooperation with the Forest Service. The goal is to assist in a better

understanding how to improve accessibility into the outdoor recreation environment, and how to apply the Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines and Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines.

The new Guidebook was funded through a partnership with the Recreation Trail Program of the Federal Highways Administration of the Department of Transportation under a Forest Service Recreation Project through the Forest Service Missoula Technology and Development Center (MTDC).

See www.AmericanTrails.org for more information on Accessible Trails, including the new Forest Service Accessibility Guidebook and links to many articles and resources.

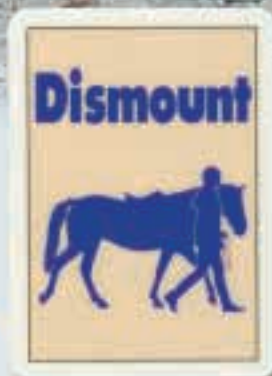
Jim Bedwell appointed to top Forest Service recreation job

USDA FOREST SERVICE CHIEF DALE BOSWORTH announced the appointment of James Bedwell as the national director of recreation and heritage resources for the Forest Service. Mr. Bedwell will lead the programs that make national forests and grasslands a vital recreation provider. He will also oversee programs that protect and interpret archaeological and historic sites. Mr. Bedwell was recently a forest supervisor in northern Colorado. He began his career with the Forest Service in 1979 in landscape architecture on the Coronado National Forest in Arizona.

USFS Recreation Trends

Some highlights on growing outdoor recreation use of the National Forests from recent surveys:

- From 1946 to 2000, the number of National Forests visitors grew 18 times to 214.1 million visits.
- Of National Forest visits, 11 million involve OHV use.
- The number of OHV owners and users increased from 5 million OHVs in 1972, 19.4 million in 1983, 27.9 million in 1995, to almost 36 million in 2000.
- Pressures on undeveloped natural land for recreation purposes due to growth in U.S. population are expected to be "moderate to heavy" through most of the West, and "heavy" in most of the Southwest and the Rockies.
- 202 million Americans over the age of 15 participate in some form of outdoor recreation, or about 97.5 percent of the population.



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What's new with historic trails?

America's national historic trails come in many shapes, sizes, and partnerships

By Steve Elkinton, Program Leader, National Trails System Program, National Park Service

THIS YEAR BRINGS TO AN END the bicentennial commemoration of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. This three-year chain of events took place along the 2,700-mile Lewis and Clark National Historic Trails. Historic trails are often not backcountry footpaths nor front country paved bikeways. Historic trails are usually a complex set of ruts, traces, special events, structures, historic and prehistoric petroglyphs, and, most importantly, stories across the landscape.

National historic trails commemorate some of the most gripping chapters in America's history. They identify the authentic routes for re-tracing the footsteps of the pioneers, the flight of Indian peoples seeking freedom, the daring-do of Pony Express riders, the demands of African Americans for fair voting practices.

Additional routes currently under study highlight the 400-year old explorations of Captain John Smith in the Chesapeake Bay, the route of French and American troops that merged together to end the American Revolution and birth the United States 226 years ago, and War of 1812 maneuvers (mostly in 1814) that led to the writing of the Star Spangled Banner. As American history unfolds, the appetite for historic trails only seems to grow.

America's national historic trails come in many shapes, sizes, and partnerships. For some, much of the resource base is intact. For others, almost nothing remains. Some have been obliterated by urbanization. Others look as if the pioneers left yesterday. Some provide outstanding recreational opportunities today. Of the 24 long-distance trails established by law as components of the National Trails System so far, two-thirds are historic trails, totaling over 28,000 miles in combined lengths.



A wayside exhibit along the Iditarod NHT at Eagle River Nature Center in Chugach State Park, Alaska

Historic Trail	Year Established	Route Length (mi.)
Oregon NHT	1978	2,000
Mormon Pioneer	1978	1,300
Lewis and Clark	1978	3,700
Iditarod	1978	2,450
Overmountain Victory	1980	270
Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo)	1986	1,170
Santa Fe	1987	1,200
Trail of Tears	1987	2,052
Juan Bautista de Anza	1990	1,200
California	1992	5,665
Pony Express	1992	1,855
Selma to Montgomery	1996	54
El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro	2000	404
Ala Kahakai	2000	175
Old Spanish	2002	2,700
El Camino Real de los Tejas	2004	2,500

These 16 trails cross 31 states, linking together hundreds of visitor centers, state parks, and historic towns. Most are held together by auto tour routes that approximate the historic route of travel. Most of these trails are still in various stages of development, so signing systems and visitor services may not be fully in place.

National historic trails are complex. Some involve resource protection. Some are brought alive through interpretive facilities. Some offer outstanding hikes and other recreational experiences. Some are largely inaccessible and may involve large tracts of private lands.

Historic Trails *continued*

One, the Iditarod National Historic Trail in Alaska, is best experienced by dogsled.

Volunteers are the backbone of national historic trails. The National Trails System Act encourages volunteers to take part in trail planning, to build and maintain trails, to conduct research, to map and promote the trails, to monitor and protect resources, to raise money for the trails— and they do. Many groups that support historic trails are divided into chapters so that local groups can respond to local issues.

Historic trails occur on both land and water, flat lands and mountains, rural areas and cities. In fact, America's national historic trails are found in 15 major cities over 400,000 in population (two in Los Angeles and four in greater Kansas City, MO). In some of these metropolitan areas, these trails have become organizing elements for urban greenways and trail systems.

The Lewis and Clark Bicentennial not only gives us a chance to reflect on how America's western landscape has changed since 1804, it has also offered many lessons about how valuable historic trails can be in linking communities, inspiring school children, studying economic benefits, planning special events, and bringing together America's rich and diverse cultural heritages. At their best, national historic trails encourage discovery, healing, and renewal.



Along the Oregon NHT near Gering, NE, this covered wagon can be seen at Scotts Bluff National Monument

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Top trail projects recognized

Annual Achievement Awards announced by Coalition for Recreational Trails

WINNERS OF THE ANNUAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS were announced by the Coalition for Recreational Trails. The project sponsors were recognized for their outstanding use of Recreational Trails Program funds. Many of the award winners attended a special ceremony in Washington, D.C. during the annual celebration for Great Outdoors Week in June.

The following trail projects and programs were honored by the Coalition for Recreation Trails for 2006. See details and photographs of the projects at www.AmericanTrails.org.

Indian Canyon Trailhead (CA) - Construction and Design of Trail-Related Facilities

- A variety of trail users, including equestrians and OHV riders, benefit from this trailhead in the Angeles National Forest in southern California.

Lake Russell Multi-Use Trail (GA) - Multiple-Use Management and Corridor Sharing

- The project created sustainable designated trails and trailheads for a Wildlife Management Area.

Upper Waiakea ATV/Dirt Bike Park (HI) - Construction and Design - Long Distance

- The project provides 22 miles of authorized OHV routes on public land on Hawaii's big island.

Springs Valley Trail (IN) - Accessibility

- Trail access points for persons with disabilities, trail reroutes, picnic tables, build split rail fencing, and educational signs.

Swallow Falls Trails and Muddy Creek Falls Overlook (MD) - Use of Youth Corps

- Trails to the popular falls were improved with support from the Maryland Conservation Corps youth service program.

Four Corners Farm (NH) - Environment and Wildlife Compatibility

- RTP funds purchased an easement for a one-mile section of trail and helped preserve a working farm, open space, and wildlife habitat.



Upper Waiakea ATV/Dirt Bike Park, Island of Hawaii

County Line Acres Bikeway Development (OH) - Construction and Design - Local

- Westerville's path system was constructed on donated land and easements, including a power line corridor., secured from private property owners and developers

W&OD Railroad Regional Park (VA) - Education and Communication

- RTP funds helped produce 50 exhibits along the 45-mile trail featuring photos and graphics of railroad history.

Wyoming State Trail Crew (WY) - Maintenance and Rehabilitation

- The crew performs maintenance, rehabilitation and development work on trails across the state.



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Management and Stewardship

National Forests will identify off-highway vehicle routes

OVER THE PAST FEW DECADES, the availability and capability of OHVs has increased tremendously. As more Americans are enjoying access and recreation on their national forests and grasslands, the need for good management is also growing. To address these concerns, the USDA Forest Service has been working on new travel management regulations for OHVs and other motor vehicle use.

On June 8, 2006, Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth approved the agency's schedule for implementation, which will guide local efforts over the next four years to designate those roads, trails, and areas open to motor vehicle use. This travel planning process emphasizes public involvement and coordination with state, local, and tribal governments.

Some national forests and grasslands already have established systems of roads, trails and areas designed and managed for motorized use. This rule does not require those units to change existing plans.

Workshops will cover OHV Route Designation Rule

THE NATIONAL OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE CONSERVATION COUNCIL will be sponsoring a series of workshops to address the recent Forest Service OHV Route Designation Rule. The regional workshops are aimed at ensuring the designation of quality OHV trail systems that are adequate for demand, sustainable and fun.

Workshop objectives are to help USFS personnel better understand the needs of the OHV community, how to develop good trails systems, and how to facilitate OHV rider involvement. The enthusiast component will teach OHV riders how to effectively work with the USFS to help ensure their needs are met.

For more information and schedules for the workshops, visit www.nohvcc.org/forest/forest.asp.

A field guide to the mythical off-highway vehicle user

By Karen Umphress, American Trails Board member

THE PAST DECADE HAS SEEN A MAJOR GROWTH in the use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs). In Idaho, registered OHVs have doubled in four years to 90,000, and Minnesota has over 250,000 registered vehicles. Nationwide, the number of people who use off-highway vehicles for recreation increased by 100% between 1982 and 2000, and then an additional 24% from 2000 to 2004. But who are these OHV users and where are they coming from?

A recent federal survey shows a typical OHV rider is a white urban male under 50 years old. While participants have been increasing across all demographic groups, Hispanic females aged 30 to 50 show the largest percentage of growth.



The study also tracks the percentage of the population in each state that use OHVs. In Rhode Island, just 11.5% of residents use OHVs, while in West Virginia, the figure is 34.5%. In 2005, there were just under 40 million people who used an off-highway vehicle. And the numbers are climbing.

One aspect of motorized recreation users is a love and respect for the environment. The older generation that is turning to OHV use in order to enjoy the outdoors were often pioneers in fighting for environmental causes. The OHV community also actively works to create and maintain trails. These stewardship activities demonstrate a high regard for the trails and for the forests in which they are located.

Trails save the world!

Continued from page 4

watersheds. And, they built over 125,000 miles of trails! In his recent book, *The Defining Moment*, Jonathan Alter states that this single action, above all others, may have been the most effective step that turned things around saving our democracy and the nation.

It did so in part by engaging people in a direction to solving the problem. The CCC workers were doing something to get themselves and their country unstuck and they were doing something to improve and heal the land—both figuratively and literally. The unemployed and disheartened were off the streets. They were working. They were sending money home.

They could see a future. Interestingly, there were those urging Roosevelt to call up veterans to form a domestic army to control an increasingly restless populace and force order. Instead he choose to create a “Tree Army” that went out to heal a national psyche by healing the landscape.

Today’s looming crisis may not yet be a financial one but there is evidence that it will be a resource and environmental debacle potentially far more challenging. Again, there may again be a place in the solution for trails and greenways.

Indeed, the trails movement can bring along with it more profound and positive changes. True, a trail is essentially a way to physically get from here to there. But that is only part of the story. Trails reveal landscapes. They open up places to explore, to experience, to take pride in, to care for. Using trails opens up places within our bodies, minds and souls and this is perhaps even more important because, ultimately, our external world and what it becomes will be the reflection of what is within us— for good or for bad.

We are talking here about being connected, be it to the sights, sounds and smell of unspoiled rural and wilderness landscapes, or experiencing the joys of a vibrant, diverse city landscape on foot or bicycle. We are talking about getting fit through daily activity, about getting the blood flowing and clearing the cobwebs from the mind. We are talking about building a sense of stewardship in the land or in improving a neighborhood or community with a trail or greenway.

“Trails reveal landscapes. They open up places to explore, to experience, to take pride in, to care for.”

Enjoying a trail or greenway or working to build one may again be “the tail that wags the dog.” If we plan and build these facilities, people will come— that’s been demonstrated with the explosive growth of the popularity of trails across North America as well as abroad. People can see, feel, and hear the difference, they can take ownership through volunteer projects. It is enabling and it is empowering.

In her soon-to-be-published book *Metro Green: Connecting Open Space in North American Cities* (Island Press, www.islandpress.org), Donna Erickson chronicles successful examples of how a number of North American cities have been reshaping themselves by weaving interconnected greenways, green infrastructure, and trails into their urban fabrics— places for people and for nature. While these changes alone will not reduce climate change or cure our “addiction to oil,” they may help change the thinking process.

American Trails has made it a goal to have a trail within fifteen minutes of every American. There is also a growing international trails movement with thousands of miles of trails and greenways being created in Europe and other continents. Imagine all of those opportunities for people to experience the alternative to an automobile and television-dominated existence— to engage in something real outside their car or house. Image the potential for this to change thinking, to build constituencies for building healthy cities, healthy nations, and a healthy planet.

Surveys show that a majority of Americans believe our nation is heading in the wrong direction, perhaps the trails and greenway movement can do its small part— maybe not so small after all— to put us back in the right direction. In that defining moment two generations ago, it was a president who made the right choices and led the way, saving a nation. Hopefully, we— all of us— can help do the same. Please bring YOUR ideas and solutions to the Quad Cities this fall!

“We are talking about building a sense of stewardship in the land or in improving a neighborhood or community with a trail or greenway.”

Robert Searns is a principal of Greenway Team, Inc., and works with communities nationwide on greenways, trails, and outdoor resource conservation.



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