



The Trail Builder

Newsletter of the Ozark Trail Association - Fall 2005

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Some of the 120 participants of the REI Mega Event gather at Brushy Creek Resort.

A Hot Start to the 2005-06 Season *Mega-Event with REI held on September 24th*

When this event was planned last spring, the event planners thought for sure that by the third week of September, the summer weather would have broken and that fall crispness would be creeping into the air. Well, Mother Nature had another idea in mind; summer definitely wasn't yet finished with the Ozarks. In spite of the 90-plus degree heat and VERY high humidity, 120 volunteers came out to construct **1 1/3 miles of new trail** on the southern portion of the Middle Fork.

The event was staged at a new location: Brushy Creek Resort near the little town of Oates on Highway J in northern Reynolds County. Brushy Creek has had an established horseback riding operation for many years and graciously offered many of their facilities free of charge to the volunteers (special thanks goes to George and Joann Becker and Rich and Brenda Jenkins). Brushy Creek offered up free camping and free use of the restroom facilities, the "John Wayne Room", and the barbeque pit. Campers could choose between any number of primitive sites or one of three teepees on the property.

The Ozark Trail Association is a non profit group with the mission to "Build, Maintain, Preserve and Protect the natural beauty of the Ozark Trail."

Crews also had to contend with some nice patches of poison ivy and hornets. In spite of the heat, humidity, bugs and poison ivy, there were no accidents or incidents to

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President's Report

The Big Push. That's what this fall has been for the OTA. The Big Push to finish the Middle Fork section. By the time you receive this newsletter, we will have completed the Middle Fork! What started as a few folks getting together on a Saturday morning three years ago is now a large-scale volunteer effort dedicated to putting the Ozark Trail on a national level. It hasn't come easily or without frustration, but it has invigorated Missouri trail users to step up and be a part of this wonderful achievement. Now that this piece of the trail is finished, new challenges await us. There are still gaps in the Courtois and Victory sections, the Marble Creek section is an island in need of a connection and there's the challenge of connecting to our neighbors in Arkansas and to the St. Louis area. First things first though. Later this fall and into the winter, we will focus on trail maintenance on other sections of the trail. We want to make sure all of the other sections of trail are in tip-top shape for next year because now that the Middle Fork is in place, more and more people will be utilizing the trail. We are also planning a dedication of the Middle Fork next spring and we want to put our best foot forward. So, even though we are shifting from trail construction to trail maintenance, there are still many opportunities to come out and do clearing, general maintenance and tread repair on the other sections. Why not come on out? We'd love to see you.

-Steve



Duff 'n' Stuff

The SCA is back. This season we have Meg back but she is now the crew leader. Ben will be the liaison with the forest service. Scott and Creedence are also returning after a summer of outdoor work.

Missouri Trails Conference speakers include John Roth: Building a Web Presence for Trails. Danny McMurphy running the OTA booth and Steve Coates delivering a lunch presentation on the OTA 200 mile opening

The Ozark Trail Association Newsletter is published four times each year and is mailed to all members. If you would prefer to receive this newsletter electronically, please contact margosky@aol.com. Contributions are welcomed and may be emailed to the editor or mailed to: Editor, Ozark Trail Association, 483 South Kirkwood Road #40, Kirkwood, MO 63122.

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Contributors: John Roth, Robert Smith
Additional Contributors: Steve Coates.



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report. Volunteers were careful to keep hydrated and to not over-exert. This was covered extensively in the pre-work safety discussions.

After trail work, the volunteers were able to get cleaned up at Brushy Creek and were treated to barbeque, a raffle and the bluegrass duo of Mike Jonas and Colleen. Some special recognition awards were given out that evening to some special people for their contributions to the Ozark Trail: Jon Crockrell for adopting and maintaining the Eleven Point River section; Robert Smith for developing the Adopt A Trail program; Greg Echele for coordinating yet another mega event. Personally embroidered US Forest Service "Red Jackets" were given out to Frank Pointer and Ron Moll for participating in at least twenty construction outings over the course of the year (pictures are on the OTA website). Along with 30 volunteers, our partner REI also contributed to the event by donating several items for the raffle.

Special thanks go out to: Greg Echele, event manager; John Roth, crew manager and construction planning; Jeff Goetter, cook; Matt Atnip, tool manager; Suzanne Smith and Jeff Fu, kitchen help; Anita George and Matt Poppe, registration; Danny McMurphy, merchandise and membership table; Steve Coates, signage; Jeff Lamb, tool support; Tom Erb, tool support; Wes Proctor, radios Margo Carroll and Peggy Welch for their wonderful Ozark Trail Guidebook; and Mark Clemons, store manager at REI.

Focus on Members



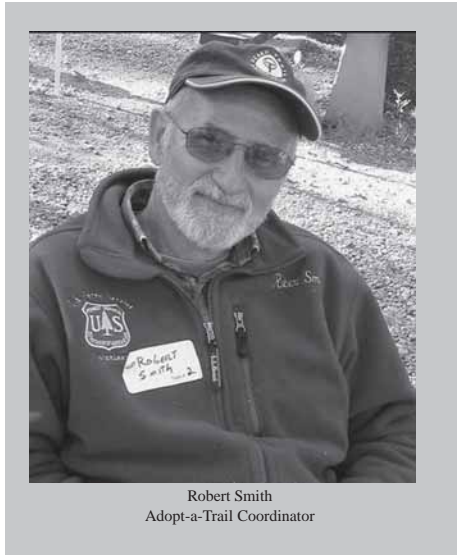
Danny McMurphy

Last year Danny McMurphy took on the role of membership coordinator. New members receive membership packets in a timely manner and the membership records are up-to-date and accurate. If you know Danny's work and family responsibilities, it's amazing that he can do those and find time for outdoor activities, but he's also doing a superb job with the membership position. Danny is a walking encyclopedia of trails in and around Missouri. He builds trail, backpacks, dayhikes, caves and canoes. In 1997 he taught himself HTML and created a website dedicated to Missouri Trails. Danny got his start in backpacking years ago through Boy Scouts and has remained active in Scouting for forty five years. Danny has seen the gear for backpacking change over the years. Now he's overseeing the changing and improving of our membership records. Congratulations and thank you Danny. It is members like Danny that keep the OTA going.



Rock Cairns Along the Trail

John Roth and Ron Moll are among the many aficionados of the "new" OTA sport: Rock Balancing. Noticed it is not called rock stacking, but *balancing*. Rocks are chosen for their size, shape and ability to support the stack and are placed in single rock towers. These are not rock cairns or pyramids. John has been known to race off to find just the perfect rock to complete his artwork. Many of them blend so skillfully into the landscape that they are difficult to notice even at 2 and 3 feet tall!



Robert Smith
Adopt-a-Trail Coordinator

The OTA Implements an Adopt-A-Trail Program

“Build it, and they will come.” What overused phrase could be more appropriate than when speaking of the Ozark Trail? We have been building trail for nearly 2 1/2 years, and hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians really are starting to come. With the trail completed, the focus is now on maintaining the trail. The Ozark Trail Association has implemented an Adopt-A-Trail program for hikers, bicyclists, equestrians and lovers of the outdoors to

maintain a portion of the Ozark Trail.

Who can adopt a trail?

School and youth groups, scout troops, church, community and service organizations, businesses, families, individuals or groups of individuals can adopt a trail. Anyone with an interest in trails and the outdoors is welcome to help maintain this beautiful Missouri resource.

What can volunteers do?

Adopt-A-Trail volunteers assist the Ozark Trail Association in maintaining the Ozark Trail. Activities include keeping the surface free of sticks, rocks and other debris, pruning small limbs from the trail corridor, cleaning waterbars and drainage ditches, and in cutting back encroaching vegetation to maintain a trail corridor. The AAT volunteer should only note locations where fallen trees (or damaged trees hanging over the trail) are located. Report this information to the AAT coordinator, and the site will be listed for a future visit by qualified sawyers. Other responsibilities include litter clean-up, maintaining the trailhead area, replacing missing trail signage and reporting vandalism and ATV damage.

Will I be trained?

Yes, sign up for a maintenance or trail-building outing to learn more about how to maintain your trail. At that outing, an experienced trail-builder will work with you and insure that you acquire the skills you need.

What should I do next?

Email the OT Adopt-A-Trail Coordinator, Robert Smith, at heyrhsmi@msn.com to find out what sections are available. You will be mailed a packet, which includes a Maintenance Agreement with the OTA.

What tools are needed?

Generally, the only tools you will need are loppers (long-handled garden pruners will be sufficient), a bow saw, and a pair of good gloves. If specialized tools are needed, they can be obtained from the land steward, which will generally be the U.S. Forest Service. The Adopt-A-Trail Coordinator will work with you to insure that you have adequate tools.

How often should I conduct maintenance outings?

It is expected that you will conduct maintenance three times each year. It is very important that one of these outings be done in the late spring to clear the trail of encroaching vegetation. You will probably want to visit again in early fall to do light maintenance and then again in mid-winter for your more strenuous work.



AHS Volunteer Vacation

Dave and Gwen Fuehring did it again! Of the now completed Fall AHS Volunteer vacation, participant and OTA member Frank Pointer says “After a week together, including four full days of trail building, the group stayed intact

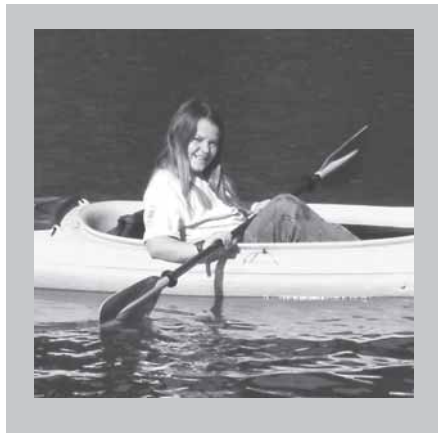
with no blood spilled, still talking with civility. We came to recognize and appreciate each other’s talents and wit (as almost always happens when trail builders get together) while completing more than ½ mile of new tread. If you enjoy fun in the woods, coupled with the honest sweat created by the rhythm of a swinging Pulaski and McLeod consider joining us in 2006. As Dave says, **‘I build trail because I can.’**”

Kids on the trail,

The Ozark Trail Association has found a way to blend trail building and children into a coherent and pleasant experience. By encouraging participation at whatever level a child can offer and educating parents and children equally about building good trail, generations of relatives, friends and soon-to-be-trail-friends can work along side each other in harmony.

Trail building veterans from around the country recently offered a variety of experiences with kids on the trail. Some volunteers expected kids to actively work if they were present and many of the trail organizations they belong to *require* that. Children are excluded from builds in other organizations because it was “too dangerous” for children. Living in the USA where crime, accidents and violence are de-rigueur, that excuse is more about liability than children’s safety. Trail building is no more dangerous than crossing a busy street and a lot more fun. With some good training, focusing on safety and including the I-can-do-anything kid to the When-is-this-over kid, the OTA sets the standard for kids giving to the trail.

Kudos to all the kids who have worked on this trail since its inception. A few of them have graciously agreed to share their experiences with you.



Maxwell Thornton-Leonard, age 13

I do not remember when I first built trail or why I said I would. I was probably reading and absent-mindedly said “yes,” but I did not really know what I was agreeing to. While I was at a trail build in Tennessee I learned to kayak from a new trail friend, Pete. That was probably the best time I have had, but it was not on the trail, just at a build on the Cumberland Trail. At one AHS volunteer vacation we had horrible summer storms and I hated that. The rain came down and the freshly built trail looked like a mudslide. There was lightening and we had to hike out to a bald. I was soaked. My boots were like water bottles!



William Thornton-Leonard, age 10

I love the trail building tools and I love the people. I thought it was going to be a great time from the first time I went, but I do not remember when that was. I just love building. My favorite things are hiking, eating steaks, swimming if the water is not too cold, building trail and playing. I like it all. The OTA is my favorite because they know about and love kids and I just like them too. I have been on two AHS volunteer vacations. One in Soddy Daisy, TN and one with the OTA at Council Bluff. I like to cook and it was great fun to cook with all those adults, even doing dishes is fun with that group.

giving to the trail



caitlin Mc Murphy, age 17

I build trail because I like to be outside and I don't really have to think about anything, unlike school where I have to think all the time. Building trail is hard work and I get a lot out of it. I get in touch with my nature side. ::ohm:: The only time I do not like trail work is when the OTA has BBQ's and we don't get to go. I like barbeque! My favorite trail experience is being outside and seeing how so many people are willing to help make the trails. That is really cool! I just wish more people my age were interested in being outside helping the environment instead of going to the movies or playing video games.

Alex Moll, Age 9



My first trail building experience was February 5th. I went because I thought it might be fun and really wanted to try out those tools I had seen my Dad taking. What I remember most is it snowed, rained and was VERY COLD, but in the afternoon it stopped raining and snowing and we went for a hike up the trail and saw some really huge pine trees. And after working, I really liked eating a hamburger and French fries at the Bixby store in the Caboose!

I like finding new creatures, like worm snakes, ring-necked snakes, salamanders, grubs and quartz rocks and new plants and flowers. The most fun thing is the camping out, because you get to play games, talk and make friends with other kids and the grown-up OTA people.

Fall / Winter Schedule of Events

November 26 & 27: Middle Fork backpacking weekend

December 3 - Karkaghne maintenance; meet at Sutton's Bluff at 8:45am; free camping

December 10 - Karkaghne maintenance; meet at Sutton's Bluff at 8:45am; free camping

December 17 - Blair Creek maintenance; meet at Blair Creek trailhead on Highway P at 8:45am

Coming in Winter 2006: Sawyer Training, weekend maintenance on the Between The Rivers section in February with food and lodging at the Winona bunkhouse, plus various maintenance outings.

Full schedule and online signup at www.ozarktrail.com/workparties.asp

Change of address/phone/e-mail form:

Name _____ OTA# (from membership card) _____

New Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

New Phone Number: (_____) _____

New E-address: _____

Please do not mail my newsletter, I prefer an electronic newsletter _____

and my email address is _____

Mail to Ozark Trail Association, 483 S. Kirkwood Road, #40, Kirkwood, Missouri 63122

Or - e-mail your changes to the membership jockey, Danny McMurphy, at mcmurfy1@yahoo.com

The OTA needs your support even if you can't come out and work. You can obtain a personal membership for only \$20 per year (family memberships of two or more are only \$35 per year).

Sign up at the OTA website, <http://www.ozarktrail.com/> and then mail in your \$20 (\$35) to the OTA address posted on the membership page. Membership includes the OTA 2005 Guide to the Ozark Trail, a laminated membership card, and an OTA patch for your jacket, patch or hat. Join us today!

Members Welcome: OTA Meetings

The Ozark Trail Association meets at 7:00pm on the second Tuesday of each month, usually at the Powder Valley Nature Center in Kirkwood. Check out the website (www.ozarktrail.com) for exact times and location. If you can make it, stop in. The meetings are open to the public and input is welcome. Meetings are professionally run so you can count on finishing at 9:00pm. But the group usually goes out to Growlers or Ruby Tuesdays for a late snack and some great camaraderie afterwards. So join in the fun, we'd love to see you.



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FALL NEWSLETTER