



2021



2021 Monumental Moments

Dear Ozark Trail Friend,

There are countless stories that could fill pages of how and why we recreate on the Ozark Trail and the opportunities it brings us. We all have stories of connections to the OT that are less about hiking and more about the Ozark Trail doing what it does best: connecting people from all over the nation to nature and allowing visitors to reap its long list of mental, physical and creative benefits. Beyond the fabled “walk in the woods,” the OT has changed lives and enabled people to find a source of comfort and tranquility. Being on the OT can ignite a lifetime love affair with the outdoors and become a gateway to endless opportunities.

For people of all ages, experience, and backgrounds, the OT represents a place to enjoy the outdoors, but it is, and can do so much more for its users. The broad and infinitely engaging activity of recreation encompasses volunteerism, stewardship, advocacy, creativity, and history. These experiences can lead to a more lasting and deeper impact for many who take those first steps. The OT is not just an opportunity to get boots on a path, but a place to be inspired and a chance to give back. This love of the OT has helped hundreds of people to experience its benefits- and each year, many of those people volunteer and work to preserve and protect it. What was accomplished this year, we could not do without the generosity and dedication of our partners, sponsors, board members, and especially our volunteers throughout the year.

Kathie Brennan
President

ozarktrail.com



Spring Mega tread repair at Council Bluff



USFS Region 9 Volunteer Award

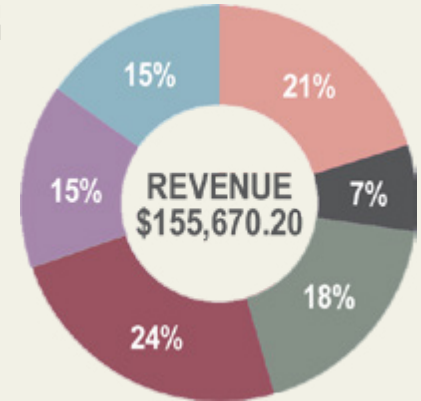
US FOREST SERVICE REGION 9 VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD

In May 2020, two major storms resulted in extensive blowdowns on the Eleven Point, Wappapello, and Between the Rivers sections of the OT in the Mark Twain National Forest (MTNF). The OTA immediately stepped up to help MTNF staff deal with this disaster. Twenty-one OTA volunteers donated 800 hours to the massive, three-week clean-up effort. Fifty-three miles of trail were assessed for damage and 35 miles were cleared. Such a herculean effort did not go unnoticed. On June 15, 2021, Gina Owens, Regional Forester for the Forest Service's Eastern Region, presented the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) District 9 "Volunteer & Service Award 2020" to OTA at a luncheon hosted by the MTNF Doniphan District in honor of the volunteers. Given that the USFS Region 9 oversees 17 national forests in 20 states, recognition of the OTA as the outstanding volunteer organization of the year carries a lot of weight. This honor is entirely due to the willingness and dedication of OTA volunteers to answer the call to service.

POWERED BY VOLUNTEERS

2021 REVENUE

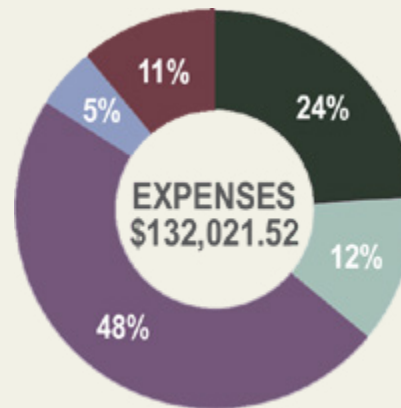
DONATIONS
BUSINESS & FOUNDATION GRANTS
GOVERNMENT GRANTS
SPECIAL EVENTS
MERCHANDISE SALES
MEMBERSHIPS



2021 MEMBERSHIPS



2021 EXPENSES



CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE
DEVELOPMENT
PROMOTION
ADMINISTRATION
FUNDRAISING

The Ozark Trail Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

2021 HIGHLIGHTS

- OT/OHT connection work continues
- Voted Terrain Magazine Readers' Choice for Best Hiking/Running Trail
- Co-hosted the 2021 Trail Skills College
- Held multiple week-long maintenance events
- Began work on the Great American Outdoors Act project to address deferred maintenance
- Doubled the OTA membership to 500+ members
- USFS Volunteer & Service Region 9 Award



2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kathie Brennan, President

Mark Goforth, Vice-President Garrett Doak, Board Member
Roger Allison, Treasurer Stephen Thompson, Board Member
Jeff Goetter, Secretary Tim Seener, Board Member
Mark Seesing, Board Member Jim Schneider, Board Member

GREAT AMERICAN OUTDOORS ACT

Signed into law in 2020, the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) established a new National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund (LRF) to finance projects through several agencies, including the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). Thanks in part to strong advocacy efforts by OTA members, the Ozark Trail sections within the Mark Twain National Forest (MTNF) will be the beneficiaries of part of these funds. Beginning in 2021, the USFS began implementing a project in the MTNF to address deferred maintenance on the Ozark Trail. Goals established by the USFS include work on trail tread, establishing or repairing erosion control features, and augmenting signage to increase safety and accessibility for all. In collaboration with MTNF staff, the OTA is playing a crucial role in this project by providing substantial volunteer assistance over the next several years. In return, the OTA will receive significant financial support through the LRF. This unprecedented project is the largest maintenance and upgrade effort ever undertaken on the Ozark Trail system within the MTNF. During 2021, GAOA funds financed 25 maintenance events to upgrade five sections of the OT.

9,581 HOURS VOLUNTEERED



816 VOLUNTEERS



156 INDIVIDUAL WORK DAYS



430 MILES
MAINTAINED ANNUALLY



VALUE OF TIME CONTRIBUTED
\$273,441.74

OUR MISSION:
**TO DEVELOP, MAINTAIN, PRESERVE, PROMOTE,
& PROTECT THE RUGGED, NATURAL BEAUTY OF
THE OZARK TRAIL.**



Chainsaw
Training

WALL OF FAME

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR



LIATRIS STUDER

Coming from Topeka Kansas, Liatris makes multiple trips to do maintenance on her adopted section and participates in work events throughout the year. She is an all-around dedicated volunteer which is evident through participation as a crew leader, USFS Certified sawyer and adopter. Her devotion to the trail is evident by her support as a Life member.

MAINTAINERS OF THE YEAR

GEORGE LIPSCOMB & JOE BUESSINK



George and Joe display a willingness to roll up their sleeves, dive into the dirty work and make significant efforts to make the OT the best it can be. These guys epitomize the bedrock volunteer spirit responsible for maintaining and building new trails, including efforts to connect the OT and OHT.



ADOPTER OF THE YEAR

DAN CHILDRESS



When you love the solitude of the woods and one of the most remote sections of the OT is just down the road, then you adopt a portion of the Blair Creek section. Dan and Carol, his wife, faithfully visit their section deep in the Roger Pryor Backcountry as well as extending out providing maintenance on other portions that are nearby.

BACKBONE AWARD

JEFF GOETTER

From keeping meeting minutes to volunteer records to cooking for OTA Volunteers, Jeff is dependable and knowledgeable about all things OTA and the OT. He has played a vital role in the organization for nearly 20 years as one of the very first OTA members. His professionalism along with his knowledge of Robert's Rules of Order, the OTA's by-laws and the history of the OTA are invaluable.



PARTNER OF THE YEAR

OZARK TRAIL SECTION HIKERS AND BACKPACKERS



Four years and 11k members later, the OTSHABers, have made a significant impact on the OTA. This group of hikers and backpackers have filled a niche in the hiking community while supporting the OT through outreach, networking, and much more. Our hard hats are off to Andi Lowry, founder of this all-encompassing group of individuals who cherish a trail that fosters new friendships and fun.

Why do you love the Ozark Trail?

"Irrational exuberance." That's a phrase Alan Greenspan once used to describe the stock market in 1996. While the Ozark Trail is hardly in any 'bubble' in terms of its usage, I still like this phrase in regards to my love of Missouri's trails. Exuberance-- if you know me, you're aware that I'm joyously unrestrained and enthusiastic about my love for the Ozark Trail. Irrational-- after over ten years with the OT, why not move on to the "big" trails? They're long. They're famous. They have big mountains or big waterfalls or big vistas or big reputations. So why would I stay so close to home?

I'm irrationally exuberant about the Ozark Trail. It's alive, it's remote, and it's within your grasp if you live in the Midwest.

It's alive: this is one of the most biologically diverse areas on the planet. The Ozarks are at the crossroads of the eastern forests of the U.S., the great plains to our west and the glaciated plains to our north. It is an ancient area of uplift with eroded mountains that are three times the age of the Appalachians. Its ancient seabeds have been heaved upwards and eaten away to create a sponge-like network of caves, sinkholes and springs. It lies along major migratory routes of birds and butterflies. It's the home of hundreds of wildflowers, trees and bushes. The weight of the insect and bug population might sink some countries into the ocean. If you love life, you can't help but love the Ozarks.

It's remote: traveling from Onondaga Cave to the Eleven Point you'll cover over 200 miles and no cities. No towns. A few paved roads. Almost no sign of civilization. It's a near-wilderness experience. Count the number of places you can hike 200 miles without a town in the continental U.S.

It's within your grasp: many trails aren't accessible in autumn and spring due to snow and ice. When Colorado is snowed-in-- come to the Ozarks. When Wisconsin is freezing-- come to the Ozarks. When the roads to the 14'ers peaks are closed-- come to the Ozarks.

The world is an amazing place and you can spend several lifetimes exploring its wonders. One of those wonders can best be traveled via the Ozark Trail.

And that's why I love it.

-John Roth
(1959-2009)