



Discover America

Newsletter of the American Discovery Trail Society

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HikaNation reunions usually include a 3–5 day hike-in prior to the reunion festivities. This September, eight people donned their gear, some using the same gear they used in 1980. The 19-mile hike from Grand Lake to Bear Lake in Rocky Mountain National Park included a climb to 12,300 feet with a brief encounter with sleet at the top, a moose and elk, but no bear!

Photo courtesy of Ed Snyder

HikaNation Celebrates 35th Reunion of Historic Hike

By Paula Guerrein, Guest Contributor

More than 30 people gathered in Estes Park, Colo., in September for a 35th reunion of HikaNation, sharing pictures, memories, and good times of the historic 1980–81 cross-country hike of 4,236 miles. A core group of 40 hikers made it from California to Delaware, highlighting the need for more hiking trails. HikaNation, sponsored by the American Hiking Society and promoted by *Backpacker* magazine, was the inspiration for the American Discovery Trail.

“A lot of lessons learned and information shared from HikaNation helped in the development of the American Discovery Trail. The ADT is a culmination of an effort that began with HikaNation,” said ADT Society president Eric Seaborg. Seaborg’s father, Glenn, planned the hiking route for HikaNation in California and a

section of that is now part of the ADT. “In contrast to the HikaNation route, the ADT links more urban areas to wilderness, has a northern route option, and in certain parts is open to bike and horse travel,” he added.

Reunion co-chairs Janet Parsons-Hartowicz and Doug Marshall were thrilled with the turnout. They said, “Jaimie Pyles celebrated her 36th birthday at our reunion and entertained our group playing guitar. Last time I saw her she was just a baby in a makeshift cart on the trail with her parents, Gomer and Rainbow.”

“HikaNation was a game-changer for me,” said Tim Geoghegan. “I quit my job and sold my

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HikaNation: Coast-to-Coast Precursor of the ADT

The goals of HikaNation were many. The short list was:

- to raise public awareness of hiking trails
- to galvanize the hiking community
- to promote the newly created American Hiking Society, which works with Congress and federal agencies to shape public policy, influence legislation, and protect funding for hiking trails

A June 1981 *Backpacker* magazine article said, “A group who hiked across America arrived in Washington a few weeks ago... AHS wants to establish a major east-west trail along the 4,147-mile HikaNation route...”

The HikaNation route included the American Discovery Trail states of California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, West Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware, as well as Washington, D.C.. Two HikaNation hikers, Susan “Butch” Henley and Reese Lukei, have worked with the ADT. Glenn Seaborg planned the hiking route in California, much of which is used by the ADT today.



Gudy Gaskill and Al Schneider (Colorado and Missouri HikaNation coordinators, respectively) share a laugh at the old souvenir T-shirt.

Photo courtesy of Janet Parsons-Hartowicz

Trail News

New Route Markers in Southwest Nebraska

By Ron Fowler, Contributing Editor

Thanks to the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District (CNPPID), users of the American Discovery Trail will find following the route easier. Two segments of the ADT follow CNPPID's Tri-County Supply Canal for a total of 18 miles in Lincoln and Dawson counties in Southwest Nebraska. Don Kraus, general manager, and Kevin Boyd, Gothenburg division manager, supported the placement of route markers along the limited-use gravel roads that follow the canal.

The Tri-County Canal was built in 1940 as a part of the irrigation and power project that stores the water of the North Platte River and distributes it over 100,000 acres of prime farmland in South Central Nebraska. The project begins with Lake McConaughy (another ADT route landmark) and extends east for over 120 miles with a network of lakes, power houses, canals, and irrigation ditches to provide power and water for residents and farmers. The system also provides lots of opportunities for recreation in the form of boating, fishing, wildlife viewing, hiking, and biking. ADT users are another recipient of the recreational value of the CNPPID system.



The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District recently granted permission to place ADT route markers along this section of trail through prime Midwestern farmland.

Photo courtesy of Ron Fowler

Stanky Creek Runs Again

By Mike Samuelson

Located in the Memphis suburb of Bartlett, Tenn., Nesbit Park once again hosted the Stanky Creek 50K/25K. The location might be miles from the route of the American Discovery Trail but its efforts show their heart is with the ADT. Organized by Altis Endurance Sports, for the second year in a row, the race shared its earnings with the ADT.

The name of the creek that flows through the park is really Harrington Creek but everyone calls the creek—and the park—Stanky Creek because the creek smells on occasion. More than 10 miles of fantastic trail have been built through the tree-filled park, providing heavily shaded trail to run and cycle.

In 2014, the inaugural Stanky Creek 50K/25K supporting the American Discovery Trail took place three days after the area was deluged by rain that caused the creek to flood and move or damage trail bridges. The biggest trail bridge damaged that day was dismantled and removed from the park. The trail was rerouted through the creek with the help of cyclists in the Memphis area. The re-route works just fine, and I am confident



Shannon Schuerman and Jady Stevens smile for the camera after their first place finishes in the Stanky Creek 25K and 50K respectively.

Photo courtesy of Frank Dembia

that everyone who regularly enjoys the trail understands that during and after a rain the traverse through the creek will contain the appropriate amount of water runoff.

The second annual event ended up raising \$1300 for the American Discovery Trail! As part of the entry fee, each runner received the exceptional sand-colored American Discovery Trail T-shirt. Shouldn't everyone own at least one of these fine shirts?

One can only hope that the Stanky Creek 50K/25K will entice another person or two to join the Society and assist in the effort to enjoy, maintain, and promote the ADT and other fine trails.

The author finished the 80-day 2012 Run Across America on Trail at the eastern terminus of the American Discovery Trail at Cape Henlopen, Del. He owns two sand-colored ADT shirts because one is simply not enough.

In Appreciation of our Donors

The American Discovery Trail Society relies on the support of our members and donors. We wish to thank and acknowledge those who have made contributions to our efforts above and beyond their membership dues. These donations help to continue to improve this valuable trail, which acts as a backbone and link to an entire system of trails throughout the country.

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A Kansas Resource with Untapped Potential!

American Discovery Trail Kansas State Coordinator Brian Anderson wrote an article about the ADT in the spring edition of the Kansas Recreation and Park Association magazine. Here are excerpts from that article.

In 1989, the American Hiking Society and Backpacker magazine created the idea of a coast-to-coast trail that would be the backbone of the National Trails System. They wanted to develop an east-to-west trail similar to the successful Appalachian Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail. The route of the ADT was selected through the efforts of citizens working with local, state, and federal land managers in the localities through which the trail passes. In 1990–91, a scouting team tested the route determined by the citizen effort. On a national level, the ADT is administered today by the American Discovery Trail Society, a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization, whose membership dollars go toward improving and maintaining the trail, supporting local trail organizations, developing educational materials, and preserving and protecting resources in the ADT corridor.

National Overview of the ADT

The American Discovery Trail (ADT) is the nation's first coast-to-coast, nonmotorized trail. Beginning in Delaware and ending in California, the ADT crosses 14 states. There is a northern and southern route through the Midwest, and Kansas is a part of the southern route. The trail is 6,800+ miles in length, making it one of the most coveted thru-hiking accomplishments in the United States. The ADT is a little different from most long-distance trails in that it purposefully takes the trail user through metropolitan areas and towns as well as areas of remote wilderness. The ADT is all about connections, linking community to community and urban areas to wilderness. The ADT connects five national scenic trails, 12 national historic trails, 34 national recreational trails, 14 national parks, and 16 national forests. It visits 10,000 sites of historic, cultural, and natural significance.

The Untapped Potential

The untapped potential of the ADT through Kansas is tourism. One doesn't have to look far to see this potential: The Missouri Katy Trail (which the ADT uses for 154 of its 237 miles from St. Charles to Boonville) has thousands of visitors yearly, who have come to support businesses in most of the towns this trail travels through. While we may not have the crushed limestone trail entirely across Kansas, we do utilize paved trails through cities, the Flint Hills Nature Trail, and many of the gravel roads in western Kansas that are low traffic and very safe for hikers and bikers. The ADT just needs to be marketed better.

How can we do this?

1. The trail needs signage and wayfinding markers. Most of the ADT isn't marked, so the visitation has been limited to those few long-distance travelers.
2. We need a state support committee. A committee could work together to maintain signage, boost marketing, inform users about local conditions, and so on.
3. Park & Recreation agencies could include the ADT in special events, such as 5K or 10K events.

Currently, trail guides can be purchased and printed at home with very good turn-by-turn trail descriptions including mileage between turns, landmarks, latitude/longitude of every waypoint, the type of surface, and general route information. This information can also be downloaded to a GPS device.



Tom Neenan: Another Trail Advocate We Will Miss

Past ADT Iowa State Coordinator and board member Tom Neenan, 92, of Center Point, died Sept. 8, 2015. In addition to being a real trail advocate, Tom served four two-year terms as mayor of Center Point in 1958, 1966, 1968, and 2000. He was active on several county boards.

Tom was on the Linn County Conservation board from 1970 through 1980, eight of those years as chair of the board. During this time, he was active in creating the 57-mile Cedar Valley Nature Trail between Waterloo and Cedar Rapids. Tom is frequently cited as the person who shepherded this project from

initiation to completion and is credited with bringing the ADT to Iowa.

In 1984, Tom was instrumental in forming the Iowa Trails Council, serving as executive director, and later as chief executive officer of this non-profit organization. During this time, Tom helped establish more than 1,150 miles of trails on former railroad right-of-way. Tom served on national trails advocacy boards, including the American Hiking Society, National Trails Association, Rails to Trails Conservancy, American Trails, and the American Discovery Trail Society.

For his work establishing trails, Tom received many awards, including the highly respected Lifetime Service Award from American Trails at the National Trails Symposium in Tucson, Ariz., in 1998.

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HikaNation

(Continued from Page 1)

belongings to go on the hike. Monty Montgomery, the hike coordinator, told me the best thing I could do after the hike was to go to college. I did and I am thankful for his advice.” Of those surveyed at the 35th reunion, most all said that they developed more self-confidence and found that it was the people on the hike and along the way that were the most memorable. “The hospitality and friendliness of everyday people in towns we went through was amazing,” said Jeannie Harmon.

Paula Guerrein hiked for two weeks with HikaNation in Arkansas. Her coast-to-coaster mother, Marce Guerrein, was 58 years old at the time of her hike.

Personal Reflections of a HikaNation Participant

By Stacey Waring, who hiked from Colorado to the Atlantic with HikaNation

As a HikaNation hiker in 1980–81, it is always a wonderful experience reuniting with my “family” of so many shared miles in years past. The Colorado reunion was no exception and in fact, the memories have become increasingly precious and wonderful. This reunion gave new insights into the persons we were then and have become.

Aging is a humbling process that provides humor in spite of our aches and pains. For many of us who were strong and healthy hikers on HikaNation in our 20s, who looked to Marce Guerrein (age 58) and John Stout (age 69) as “old folks” in 1980, this reunion brought a realization that the joke was really on us. We are now in that age range—late 50s to 70s—and for many of us coming together in Colorado, the notion of what those two did 35 years ago is difficult to imagine now. We have had knee replacements, hip replacements, back problems, foot issues. How on earth *did* they accomplish this trip? That was a question that brought laughter and humility throughout the weekend.

HikaNation has its unique meaning to each person who participated, and helping to provide seeds for the ADT is an accom-

plishment that brings us all pride.

It was an honor to have been part of the hike in 1980–81 in terms of those pure achievements, personal and other. But with the passing of time, the success that likely brings us the most happiness is knowing that the family we created then with our boots and our souls, is still alive and well. Though time can age us physically, our personal and spiritual bonds of that shared experience are forever.

Jason Hanold Joins ADTS Board of Directors

The American Discovery Trail Society welcomes new board member Jason Hanold to our fold.

Jason is the CEO and managing partner of Hanold Associates, an executive search firm specializing in human resources officer and board recruiting for firms including Patagonia, NIKE, McKinsey, Northwestern University, and eBay, among others.

Jason serves on the national board of directors of Outward Bound USA. Previously, he was on the board of directors of Big City Mountaineers, a non-profit organization that benefits at-risk youth. In addition, he is on the advisory board of Scout Talent Exchange and the board of directors of the Kenilworth Sailing Club.

Jason is a lifetime member of the American Discovery Trail Society and the Sierra Club, and an alumnus of the Outward Bound Professional Development Program.

He enjoys mountaineering, backcountry hiking, and cycling, and is just starting fat tire bike racing.

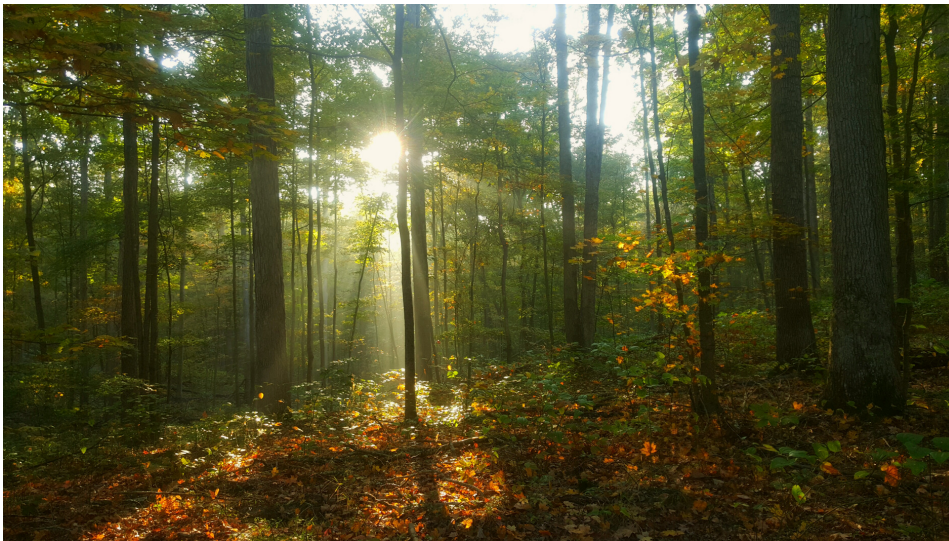
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The sun breaks through the forest canopy on a fall day along the ADT on the Knobstone Trail in Indiana. See it in color at www.discoverytrail.org! Photo courtesy of Robin Grapa

ADT Society Has Many Volunteer Opportunities

At the American Discovery Trail Society's fall membership and board meetings in Hebron, Ky., many new ideas were offered to increase our membership and visibility as an organization. One result was an ad hoc committee that was formed to develop standards and benefits for memberships for businesses along the trail. This membership would provide an opportunity for businesses to show their support of the trail and to encourage trail users to support these local stores.

One of the benefits would be a sign that business members could display in their stores. Cyrus Conner offered to help design this sign. Cyrus is 14 years old and has an interest in computers and graphic

design. His mother is Serinda Conner, the Delaware ADT State Coordinator. He is our youngest committee member!

The ADT Society needs the kind of help Cyrus is donating—maybe you could contact businesses to see if they would become members?

There are an abundance of volunteer opportunities for people who would like to help develop this unique trail. One does not have to be a board member to serve on one of our committees. Also, state committees are being formed in each state to help the coordinators with such things as trail signage, staffing booths at festivals or conferences, giving presentations to groups, checking on-the-ground trail descriptions, and developing west-to-east turn-by-turn directions.

We could use help in contacting visitor cen-

ters along the route to seek their involvement and developing a phone app for our trail guides.

Volunteer contributing editors for this newsletter are welcome and additional help in gaining congressional support for our proposed legislation is always needed.

The board of directors currently has openings for a treasurer and a general counsel. If anyone with a background in accounting or law is willing to serve in either of these capacities, please let us know.

The work is very rewarding, so if you are interested in helping, please contact your state coordinator (see the ADT website, www.discoverytrail.org) or the American Discovery Trail Society's office at 800-663-2387 or info@discoverytrail.org.

Attention Federal Employees

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

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

Thanks!