



The Trail Builder

Newsletter of the Ozark Trail Association Summer 2007

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National Volunteers of the Year

Dave and I deeply appreciate the efforts of the Ozark Trail Association, the US Forest Service and everyone else who nominated us for the AHS Volunteer of the Year award. The best parts about getting this award are that we worked alongside so many wonderful people in our volunteer efforts and we got a tremendous amount of enjoyment in the process.

Our career as trail volunteers started in 1999 with our first AHS volunteer vacation at Buffalo National River. This was also our first experience as volunteers of any kind and we were hooked. The people we worked with had great attitudes, could enjoy themselves while working hard and didn't complain about anything. In the next 4 years we enjoyed trail work on volunteer vacations in Utah, Arkansas, Virginia, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Indiana and Tennessee.

The Ozark Trail Association came along just at the right time at the end of 2002 to fulfill our need for a local trail to work on. We could build or maintain trail almost every weekend if we wanted! The OTA provided us with frequent outings in the quiet and beautiful Mark Twain National Forest. The OTA also provided us with the opportunity to meet people who love the Ozark Trail and who have hiked every mile of the trail. We have fond memories of the miles that we have trekked with Robert Smith, John Roth, Danny McMurphy and others. In May 2004, the OTA sponsored the first of four AHS volunteer vacations on the Ozark Trail. Many of the people that we met on previous volunteer vacations honored us by coming to Missouri to work on our trail. We are especially grateful to Frank Pointer, who enjoys volunteer vacations as much as we do and who

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."

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President's Report

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 margo@ozarktrailguide.com. Contributions are welcomed and may be emailed to the editor OTAeditor@gmail.com, or mailed to: Editor, Ozark Trail Association, 483 South Kirkwood Road #40, Kirkwood, MO 63122.

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A snail snacks on one of the many summertime mushrooms.

It doesn't seem like that long ago that I was writing a report during the slow summer months and here I am doing it again. For me, summer is a time to take a break from OTA activities (and some time off of work as well). It won't be that long before we gear up for our fall construction season and this year we have a good project lined up. We'll be building on the Courtois section to close an 8-mile gap in the trail that starts at The Narrows between the Courtois and Huzzah. The new trail will be very interesting and will have some nice bluff-top views of the rivers. We're planning a mega-event kick-off outing on September 22nd when we'll partner with REI once again. Be checking the website for more details.

Another bit of news I'd like to pass on to you is that the OTA has been asked by the Department of Natural Resources to put together a proposal to assume oversight responsibilities of the Ozark Trail Council. Representatives of the two organizations met in May in Rolla to discuss this plan. Also at that meeting were representatives of the US Forest Service, Department of Conservation, and Show-Me Backcountry Horsemen. The OTA is currently working on this proposal and is planning to have a draft ready to present to DNR by the first of October. The goal is for the OTA to assume chair of the Council at the October 20th Council meeting.

The reason for the change in direction has a lot to do with the fact that, in order to realize the St. Louis-to-Arkansas vision, the remaining development of the Ozark Trail will be on private property. This will require the acquisition of easements and/or rights of way from hundreds, perhaps thousands, of land owners. This is something that falls outside of DNR's mission and they feel that the overall management of the Ozark Trail should shift to an organization that is better positioned to do this. Hence, the OTA was approached to lead and I think the OTA is ready and able.

A lot of questions still need to be answered, namely, how is this going to be funded? The task of implementing the St. Louis-to-Arkansas vision goes beyond what can be done with just volunteers. So, OTA is investigating ways to fund this plan over the next five years and the partner land managers are also investigating ways to help with funding. The plan is starting to take some shape and should have more definition by October.

The OTA is coming up on its fifth birthday this December and we sure have come a long way. And it has been driven by volunteers, which brings me to one final point: the OTA has been and will continue to be about the volunteer experience. Even though, we're being asked to assume a new responsibility in the Council, and that responsibility will require funding and staffing, we will still remain an organization centered on the volunteer experience.

I hope to see you out on the trail this fall.

Happy Trails,
Steve





Superstar volunteers

Volunteers(continued from page 1)

helped make the OTA volunteer vacations a great experience for the out-of-state volunteers.

A couple of years ago, Dave found his true calling on the Ozark Trail. He became a Forest Service certified sawyer. I became his swamper (no certification required). Since then we have tramped many miles of the OT to clear deadfall and trees knocked down by storms. The best time of our life on the OT was last fall, when we spent the lovely fall weekends clearing trail and camping in the beautiful, rustic and uncrowded Forest Service campgrounds.

We thank everyone whom we have worked alongside over the years and we thank everyone who nominated us for this award. Whenever we look at this trophy, we'll remember the wonderful people who helped make it possible.

Gwen Fuehring
July 2, 2007

at the OTA observance of National Trails Day when Dave and Gwen Fuehring were awarded the AHS 2007 Volunteer of the Year award, National and Central States region.

Taum Sauk Update

The most popular section of the Ozark Trail has had a rough 18 months.

In December 2005 a reservoir on Proffit Mountain failed,

obliterating Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park.

In September 2006 a tornado tore across Goggins Mountain.

The middle half of this 33-mile section of trail is closed, and hikers from

across the state and

the region have been in a state of near mourning.



We had hoped to build a reroute around the construction area at Johnson's Shut-Ins last fall, but things just didn't work out. That work is now tentatively scheduled for 2008, but is dependent on the Park's reconstruction plan. We should know by fall if there is a chance the middle section of the Taum Sauk trail will be reopened in the spring.

The western portion of the trail should be open this fall. State Park crews went into the tornado area last spring with chainsaws to clear a path and remove dangerous trees. Once general maintenance has been completed, the trail should be open from Highway N to Highway A, just in time for fall colors.

The OTA Grows Up

John Roth, Acting Executive Director

We're Growing! This summer marks my tenth anniversary as an Ozark Trail volunteer, a fact I find somewhat frightening in that it's a third of the OT's existence (1977-2007). It doesn't seem that long ago that I grabbed my first pair of loppers and started hacking away on the Trace Creek section of trail. Time flies.

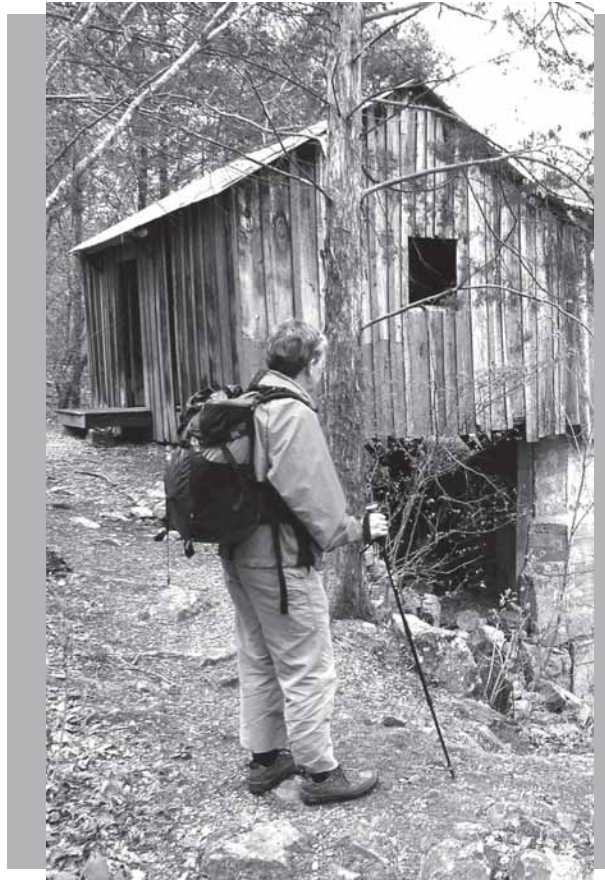
Time has certainly flown since the inception of the Ozark Trail Association in December 2002. We started out with about two dozen folks, with no great aspirations except to complete the Middle Fork section. That first winter was tough at times, but by fall we had grown our forces to four dozen. Then eight. Then twelve.

At the end of our third year we put over 1,000 different volunteers on the trail with over 30,000 hours. Our "MegaEvents" were drawing well over 100 people per outing, and even pedestrian maintenance outings were attended by 20-30 people. Robert Smith then created our Adopt-A-Trail program, and scores of adoptees now lop, saw, sign and mow about 200 miles of trail.

We're now in the trail tourism business (see related article in this issue). We might soon be in the easement acquisition business (more on this in the next issue). We're working on new maps, new interpretive trail programs, a new volunteer program... oh, and this fall we start building new trail on the Courtois section.

We're busting at the seams.

If you've ever been to our monthly staff meetings, you'll know there is a lot of tedious work involved in getting volunteers on the trail. I won't go into the details, but trust me... it's tedious. It's might be only 5% of our total volunteer effort, but it's crucial to our success—tool purchases, tool sharpening, insurance, accounting, certification programs, membership, newsletters—all required, none of it as fun as being on the trail.



What our growing base of trail volunteers could really use is a few hours of paid staff to do the 'tedious' work required to keep the OTA firing on all cylinders. And that's just what we've done. It is my pleasure to introduce to you the first part-time employees of the Ozark Trail Association!

Derek Drudge, summer intern.

John Roth, Acting Executive Director

Both jobs are being funded by the AmerenUE grant (see article in this issue) and will be devoting most of their time on the new trip planner / shuttle service. Some of their time will be devoted to the 'tedious tasks' I mentioned previously, as well as paving the way for permanent staff positions. We're growing at such a pace that we'll need to follow the examples of other successful trail organizations and have a few staffers on hand to assist our growing volunteer base.

See you on the Courtois this fall!

John

2007 Sawyer Class

Growing up in the late 50's and early 60's, the guys I went to grade school with in St. Louis joked about wanting to be in home economics, not shop class. After all, that's where the girls were. Fast forward 45 years and here I am going to class with a bunch of young girls. But, I never thought it would be a chain saw class. The girls and guys from Americorp, Show-me Missouri Back Country Horsemen and 3 members from OTA gave up 2 Saturdays and 1 Sunday of a picture perfect May, to become certified sawyers.

U.S. Forest Service requires that any saw work on the Ozark Trail be done by certified sawyers. So Todd Horn, Chris Schwab and I went for it. I'll also be using the training during my work at Marble Creek Campground. The lesson plan was Wildland Fire Chain Saws S - 212 and was developed by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group.

We had about 17 students and 4 instructors in the classroom at the Potosi Forest Service office. We were all issued student workbooks to use along with the slides that were presented.

Day one was about - Safety Requirements, Job Hazard Analysis, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Situational Awareness. I learned that I need to acquire some safety equipment or make use of the OTA equipment, break some very bad personal chainsaw habits and be more aware of my surroundings when using a saw. The PPE needs are a hard hat, saw chaps, leather gloves, long sleeve shirt, and eye and ear protection. Situational Awareness and Job Hazard Analysis should be understood.

The second part of day 1 was about the chain saw and our need to know how it works and how to perform basic repairs and maintenance. Those Forest Service guys were brave to let us take apart their saws. It all worked out ok, and we had no left over parts.

Day 2 was about Chain Saw Tasks and Techniques, this is the meat and potatoes of using a chain saw for felling, bucking and limbing. The latter two are what we will find most useful in OTA and its on-going trail work. And again more bad habits to break. Don't drop and yank to start the saw, with the chain brake OFF! Use that brake whenever the saw is not sawing, start the saw on the ground or other approved methods. Wear your PPE. Use the gunning sight on the saw to fell your tree safely. Use



the correct method of notching the tree for felling and use the correct method for bucking and limbing the down tree. Without the PPE and for sure the chaps, one limbing operation during day three's field training could have been a disaster. One of the students emerged from a dense limbing operation with his chaps ripped open.

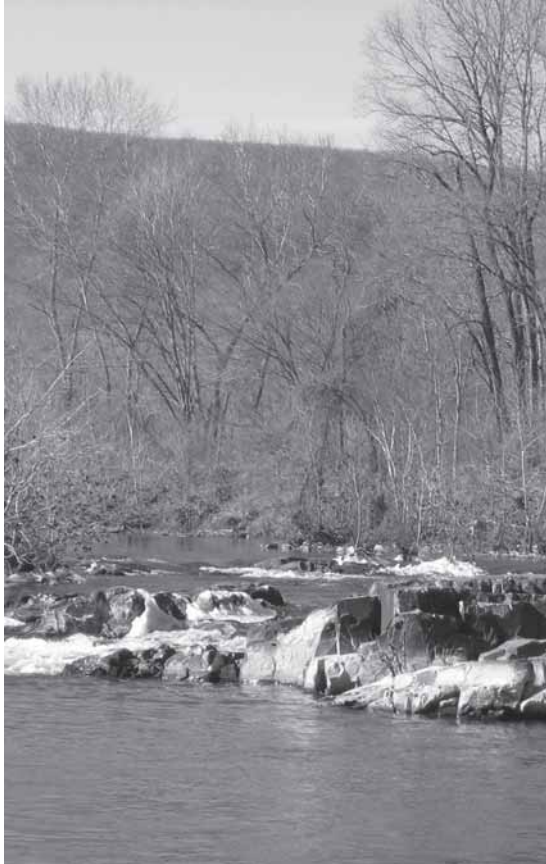
And then there was day 3, test day: a day in the woods feeling trees, bucking trees and limbing. We were working in an area of Washington County where the forest needed to be open for correct tree growth and production. We split up into 4 groups and completed our assigned tasks. As mentioned the chaps getting cut was an eye opener and several trees not landing on the ground gave us an insight into getting the tree on the ground. Our group was finished first and so we had to wait until the 3 other groups completed their work. Now the more I think about it, maybe our instructor, Jason, just wanted us out of the woods, without any more excitement!

We all received our Chain Saw Certification, mine's an A, read beginner. That's ok I learned a lot and can upgrade later with experience.

Bob Sliger

<http://www.ozarktrail.com/images/sawyerclass0507/>

New Shuttle Service this Fall



Shuttle Service and Trip Planner Debuts This Fall

Whether you day-hike, backpack, mountain bike or ride a horse, your fall trip to the Ozark Trail in Iron and Reynolds County just got easier. This September the Ozark Trail Association will unveil a comprehensive online trip planner and operate a scheduled shuttle service for over 150 miles of trail in the Black River region of the Ozark Trail.

The trip planner database will contain detailed itineraries for over 150 custom-designed trail trips ranging from 5 to 80 miles in length within a 20-mile radius of Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park. A special query tool will prompt visitors for their mode of travel (foot, bike, or horse), number of days, relative difficulty and optional natural scenic features. A suggested list of trail trips will be returned, each with a day-by-day itinerary that includes suggested camping spots, water

sources, trailhead directions, digital maps and a list of local amenities.

A shuttle servicing 12 trailheads will operate on a seasonal basis in the fall and spring. The shuttle will follow a set schedule Friday through Sunday and be available on a reservation-basis the remainder of the week. The average shuttle cost will be \$20 per person with a 20% discount to Ozark Trail Association members. A twelve-bicycle trailer will be in tow for mountain bikers.

This foray into trail tourism is being funded through a \$75,000 grant, part of \$5 million "project enhancement" program AmerenUE agreed to as part of a \$15 million fine resulting from the December 2005 Taum Sauk Reservoir collapse. Funded projects were limited to the immediate vicinity of the reservoir. Within a 20-mile radius there are over 150 miles of non-motorized trail: the Taum Sauk, Karkaghne, Middle Fork, Marble Creek and South Trace section of the Ozark Trail, and the Council Bluff, Goggins Mountain Equestrian and Bell Mountain trails.

Reaction to these upcoming services has been overwhelmingly positive. "I've always wanted to backpack the Ozark Trail, but wasn't sure of where to go or how to get there," said Margot, an Arcadia Valley resident. "It's almost in my back yard, and it's been something of a mystery. Your planner is what I've been waiting for."

"Bring on the Middle Fork," wrote a mountain biker on an online forum. "I can be at the DD trailhead by 9am, grab the shuttle to Highway J, then its sweet single-track back to the car!"

The planner will include links to local lodging, a thought not lost to Frank and his wife from Arnold, Missouri. "B&B on Friday, a shuttle to fall colors with a picnic lunch on Saturday, then shopping on Sunday. It's too easy. Count me in."

To access the trip planner, visit www.ozarktrail.com/planner. To view the shuttle schedule and make reservations, visit www.ozarktrail.com/shuttle. Both online services will be available after August 15th.

It's time to renew your Ozark Trail Membership

Support the OTA's mission to develop, maintain, preserve, promote and protect the Ozark Trail. New members receive an OTA patch, a membership card and an Ozark Trail Guide, plus the satisfaction of helping out a great cause. There are three membership types: Individual (\$20/year), Family (\$35/year) and Lifetime (\$250). If you are registering your family, please include all family member names in the "Other Information" box if they also want membership cards).

All funds go towards trail construction and maintenance, maps & brochures, website maintenance and slight administrative costs. There are no salaries—the OTA is a volunteer-run organization! Please take a moment to clip and mail your renewal or, *new this year*, pay via PayPal

- Family membership \$35
 Individual Membership \$20
 Lifetime Membership \$250

Name _____

Address _____

City _____, State _____ Zip _____

(optional) Phone _____ Email _____

Other information: - please list any special skills, experience, or resources (trail maintenance, equipment, etc) that you have and that you would be able to share with the OTA (family memberships should also include all family names here):

mail to: Ozark Trail Association
483 South Kirkwood Road #40
Kirkwood, MO 63122

or PayPal (<https://www.paypal.com>) to **OTAmembership@ozarktrail.com** (this account can accept credit card payments and checks.) Use the "send money" feature and enter the name, address, etc. information in the "note" section.

Check here to have your newsletter sent via email!

Volunteer!!

Daily operations tasks are also available, such as marketing, promotions, and many more!

For general volunteering information, or to become a certified Trail Leader, contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Jeff Goetter at ota.volunteer@gmail.com

[Check out the fall trail work schedule at www.ozarktrail.com](http://www.ozarktrail.com)

Members Welcome: OTA Meetings

The Ozark Trail Association meets at 7:00pm on the third Monday of each month. This time slot has been changed from the previous one on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. 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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Summer NEWSLETTER