



# TRAIL TALK

NEWSLETTER OF THE OZARK TRAIL ASSOCIATION



## Trail treasure hunt Geocaching on the Ozark Trail

By Amy Chapman and Bob Chapman

Are you getting ready to head out for a hike on the Ozark Trail? Why not search for hidden treasure along the way? Geocaching is a high tech treasure hunting game, where GPS (Global Positioning System) or smartphone users input coordinates into their devices to find hidden treasures. There are currently over 1.8 million geocaches hidden worldwide, just waiting to be found. And, several of them are along the Ozark Trail. Your favorite section of trail may just camouflage some of these treasures. So, grab your GPS device or smart phone and play along!

To begin, all you need to do is download geocache locations from online sources. You can do this through a variety of websites including [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com). Search by state or enter "Ozark Trail" in the search to see information about caches hidden on or near the OT. On geocaching websites, you can create a profile and a geocaching name, known as a "handle." A handle is the name that will display to other users any time you post your finds. Download the coordinates for the caches you'll search for to a smart phone or a GPS receiver. Then, it's time to hit the trail. On the trail, use the coordinates, map and/or compass to navigate close to the location of the cache. Instructions are usually available on the geocaching websites.

The GPS will direct you to the correct general location. When you are within about 30 feet or so, you will not need to rely solely on the GPS. Just start looking around for anything out of the ordinary. Caches come in various shapes and sizes, and are usually well hidden. Most of them have been camouflaged to try to match the environment. Cache descriptions and hints can be helpful.

After you have found the container and opened it, sign the log with your geocaching handle and enter the date. If the cache container is big enough, there could be treasures inside known as "swag," to swap. Just remember, if you take something, leave something. A geocacher always carries some kind of interesting swag to place into a found cache.

When you are finished with the cache, place the log, and any swag back into the container and replace the container just as you found it. Be sure to log your find online to keep track of where you have been and allow the owners of the cache to easily be notified of your find. If you enjoy finding hidden treasure, you might consider placing some caches on the Ozark Trail and entering them at geocaching websites for other cachers to find.

It's not just fun and games. Geocachers bring an environmentally friendly atmosphere to their surroundings. With programs and events such as CITO (Cache in Trash Out), geocachers give back to their playground by cleaning and maintaining trails, roads and even parking lots.

Some people geocache for the thrill of being the first to find (FTF); some do it to track the amount of caches they find; others for the adventure of exploring new places with friends and family. Whatever your cause, geocaching may be just be the "treasure" for you!

*Amy Chapman works as an Outdoor/Fitness/Openecaching Product Support Specialist for Garmin, Inc., maker of popular GPS devices. Bob Chapman teaches courses on geocaching and meteorology.*

## NEWS & UPDATES

### New \$10,000 REI grant

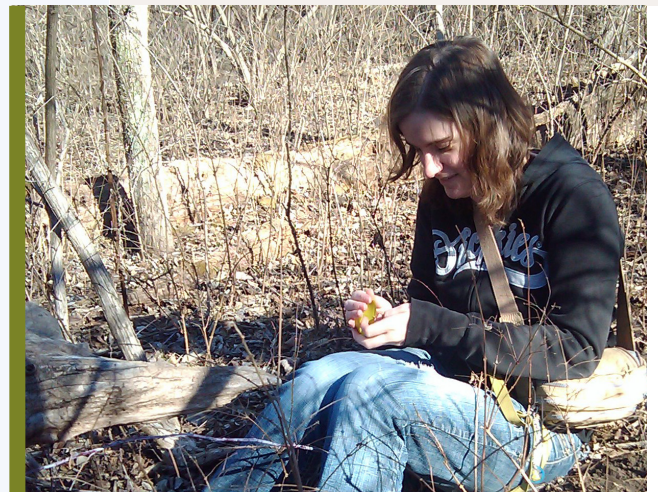
The OTA has received its third award from Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI.) This grant will support work on the Berryman Trail and help in purchasing logo items to sell including an embroidered OTA patch.

### Mowing program progress

Our summer mowers are on track to clear over 140 miles of trail. Moving north to south, "the Dannys" will soon head for the North Fork section.

### New trail crewleaders

Seven volunteers completed crewleader training in August 2012. New crewleaders received Red Cross First Aid Certification along with instruction on leading groups to construct and maintain the OT. Thank you for stepping up! Extra thanks to Josh Pennington who organized the training, to Dan Tihen for the first-aid portion and to all who contributed.



Usually, stealth is the rule when hiding or seeking a cache. Interaction between cachers mostly happens in the logbook and via geocaching websites.

## OUR MISSION

The Ozark Trail Association is a non-profit group with the mission to develop, maintain, preserve, promote and protect the rugged natural beauty of the Ozark Trail.



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## POWERED BY VOLUNTEERS.

**JOIN US:** Learn about volunteer opportunities, become an OTA member at [ozarktrail.com](http://ozarktrail.com) or email [OTA.Volunteer@gmail.com](mailto:OTA.Volunteer@gmail.com).

**MEMBER MEETINGS:** 7:00 - 9:00 p.m., second Tuesday of each month. All are welcome!

*Trail Talk* is published four times each year for OTA members. If you would prefer to receive your copy electronically, please contact Kathy Atnip, editor, at [kathy.atnip@ozarktrail.com](mailto:kathy.atnip@ozarktrail.com).

**Photos:** Amy Chapman, Missouri Department of Conservation



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## OTA celebrates 10th anniversary this year

December 2012 marks the Ozark Trail Association's first decade. OTA founder John Roth applied for non-profit 501 (c)(3) incorporation which was granted on December 12, 2002 by the state of Missouri.

To commemorate our anniversary, the OTA has developed a special logo (shown on this newsletter) that will be used on our publications and website and we're planning a special anniversary edition of *The Connector* annual magazine.

The OTA also plans to host a birthday party event in January 2013. Stay tuned for more details and find out how you can join in the celebration.



The lone star tick, *amblyomma americanum*, which can transmit Ehrlichiosis, "questing" for a new host from a blade of grass

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### Hot. Hot. Hot.

By Steve Coates

That sums up this summer in Missouri — one of the hottest and driest on record. Our beloved Ozarks took a beating at the hands of Mother Nature. Many trees succumbed to the conditions. We also had wildfires to contend with that forced temporary closures of the Ozark Trail. It was a hard summer, but we've managed to get through the worst of it and the Ozark forests will soon begin to shed their sunburned leaves and prepare for fall. I admire the forests for being able to tolerate the 100-degree temperatures of summer and the sub-zero wind chills of winter and look glorious while doing it.

Our summer mowing program trudged on in spite of the heat. Our two seasonal employees, Dan Schell and Danny Westrich have done a great job fighting back the brush to keep the trail in great shape. Also, the OTA received some good news when we were awarded another RTP grant for construction and rehabilitation of the eastern side of the Berryman Loop. We had support in this award from the Gateway Off-road Cyclists (GORC), Show Me Backcountry Horsemen, and the U.S. Forest Service. Along with the work that OTA has already completed on the Berryman Loop, this new project will bring the entire Loop up to the quality standard that has made this an epic trail.

Fall is coming. I hope you can find time to enjoy our wonderful Ozark Trail.

## KEEPING SAFE OUTSIDE

### Better safe than sorry when it comes to ticks

It's been a good year for ticks in Missouri due to a mild winter and very dry weather. That means a bad year for tick-borne diseases and these can cause permanent damage to your health — even death — if not treated. To help you stay safe as you work and play on the Ozark Trail, here are some quick facts about tick-borne illnesses and how to avoid getting sick.

Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever is the most common disease caused by ticks in Missouri, followed by Lyme Disease and Ehrlichiosis. If you're affected by a tick-borne disease, you may have fever, fatigue, a headache, aching joints, nausea or diarrhea. Sometimes a red bump will appear at the site of the bite and can be followed by a "bullseye," a spreading red ring, but there is often *no sign* of infection at a tick bite. If you experience even mild flu-like symptoms after being on the trail, please see your doctor as soon as possible and let them know you've been outdoors. Most often a doctor will prescribe antibiotics based on symptoms since early tests may not reveal tick-borne diseases.

After you've been outdoors during warm weather, check carefully for ticks and remove any you find within 24 hours to avoid the chance of illness. The best way to remove a tick is to grasp the insect with tweezers as close to the skin's surface as possible and pull straight out. Avoid squeezing the body of the tick and try to remove the entire insect. Effective ways to avoid tick bites are to use a spray repellent with DEET on your skin, and treat or wear clothing with permethrin. We want to see you back out there, so please take care.

Sources: Missouri Department of Conservation and University of Missouri Extension