



# Discover America

Newsletter of the American Discovery Trail Society

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Spring 2021

## ADT Feature Friendship, Indiana



*At the family-friendly shooting events, participants and vendors dress in period clothing from the pre-1840s era.*

Photo courtesy of the National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association, NMLRA.org

*By Jim Shaner, Contributing Editor*

Along the southern route of the American Discovery Trail in Indiana, the small village of Friendship has a population of about 50 souls, give or take. However, during certain times of the year the population swells to many times that number. When I walked down the narrow Route 62 to Friendship, I passed three campgrounds, which seemed to offer a lot of capacity for such a small town, but all were all strangely empty of people in the first week of October.

Then I heard a gunshot. I soon learned that this village can be the noisiest place in Indiana because it is the site of the National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association's two major shooting events each year at the Walter Cline Range.

The annual Spring National Shoot is in mid-June, and the National Championship Shoot is in mid-September. Each event lasts for nine days, with around 2,000 people attending.

There are competitions for muzzle-loading rifles, pistols, shotguns, muskets, bench guns, and slug guns, as well as for primitive archery, tomahawk throwing, and knife throwing. There is even an area where the competition involves trekking through the woods to shoot at hidden targets. After hearing just one man shoot his rifle, I cannot imagine how loud the shoots must be. Other smaller shoots are also held during the year.

The NMLRA Spring Shoot is considered a rendezvous, meaning the spring shoot doesn't commemorate a battle or event. Historically, a rendezvous was a gathering of trappers and traders to exchange furs for goods.

The site also hosts historical reenactments. The participants in these events generally portray military units that were in specific battles. They strive for authenticity from the boots they wear to the insignia on their hats to the color of their stockings. Each unit has guidelines as to what can and cannot be worn. The reenactors also strive to perfect their military drills and maneuvers. They may give demonstrations, including live cannon fire.

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*Muzzle loading rifles are usually loaded with black powder and then a projectile is rammed in from the open end of the barrel.*

Photo courtesy of the National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association



## Trail News



*Joe Taylor served for nearly six years on the ADT Society board of directors.*

### A Sad Passing

It is with great sadness that the American Discovery Trail Society announces the passing of one of our board members, Joe Taylor. Joe died on Dec. 3 at age 65 from complications related to covid-19. He brought positive energy, a ready smile, and a concern for others to the board. He regularly made fellow board members aware of any significant trail happenings in his area.

Joe was a dedicated trail advocate and promoter. He served on our board from 2013–2016 and again from 2019 until his death. In addition to the ADT Society board, Joe served on the board of American Trails, and was a member of the Blackhawk Hiking Club and the Sierra Club. He was the president/CEO of the Quad Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau where he worked for more than 25 years after its opening in 1990, and where the ADT Society offices were briefly located. He co-hosted the National Trails Symposium in the Quad Cities in 2006, where the ADT Society held its board meeting that year. Joe later became the executive director of the Evansville Convention and Visitors Bureau in Indiana, where he again laid the groundwork for the ADT Society annual meeting there in 2019.

He leaves his wife, Kathy, and a host of relatives and friends.

### New ADT Signs for Oakley

Late last year, the city of Oakley, Calif., became one of the newest trail towns on the American Discovery Trail. California coordinator John Mercurio suggested a shift in the route to include more trail mileage. In addition, a portion follows lightly traveled roads past mini-markets, fast-food establishments, and a motel.

John worked with city officials to mark the new route. He cut and prepped several four-inch by four-inch redwood posts and attached the standard ADT markers. The city provided a crew to install the new signposts in the locations that John identified to best serve future trail users.

The cooperation of the city was essential to the success of this project. John said: “It was great working with director of public works Kevin Rohani to make this happen.”

Oakley lies at the western end of the Antioch Bridge over the broad San Joaquin River and provides the first services that westbound trail users



*ADT travelers will benefit from the trail relocation and signage in Oakley, Calif. An added bonus is the proximity to services, like the vineyard in the background.*

Photo courtesy of John Mercurio

encounter when they enter the San Francisco Bay Area after crossing the California Delta.



*Dick Bratton was an active trail promoter locally and nationally for many years.*

### Another Loss

Dick Bratton, the former ADT state coordinator for Colorado, died Feb. 18 at the age of 84. He served on the ADT Society board of directors from 1996 to 2014 and was also the vice president for public relations for many years.

In addition to promoting the ADT, Dick was the mayor of Green Mountain Falls from 1996 to 2004. He spearheaded the town's efforts to restore and rebuild trails in the area,

seeing them as a chance to both attract visitors and introduce locals to the splendors of the outdoors.

Dick was a consummate people person, social and fun to be around. His outgoing personality attracted others to his causes. He started a volunteer trails committee in his town, feeding them at a local restaurant after each hard day's work. When knee problems kept him from maintaining trails, he still met with the volunteers to feed, encourage, and direct their efforts.

Dick provided information and assistance to innumerable long-distance ADT hikers, and their stories of his tremendous hospitality are legendary. He will be greatly missed.

## Discover Leprechaun Canyon, Utah

By Bob Palin, Utah State Coordinator

Of all the geologic wonders in southern Utah, the arches and slot canyons are probably the most famous. The American Discovery Trail passes right by a nice slot canyon that is almost certainly missed by the majority of travelers. A few miles north of the Hite Bridge, on Utah Highway 95, lie the Irish Canyons, a set of narrow slot canyons in soft sandstone. One of them, Leprechaun, is easily accessed from the highway near mile marker 28. It is just north of Sandthrax Campground and five miles northwest of ADT waypoint R30030 at Hog Springs.

A short dirt road heads northeast toward a rather nondescript wash opening, and a trail continues from there. The trail is partially overgrown by willows and tamarisk, which you can bushwhack through against the right-hand wall. Continue to follow the wash as it enters a small slot that is fun to explore. It's possible to climb out of the end of it but almost everybody backtracks and scrambles up the sandstone on the right just before the start of the small slot. There are usually marks on the face where people climb up. If it has been wet, it may be too slippery, so look across the wash and assess whether you want to use the crack to get up to the next level. Once up above the small slot, follow it into the canyon. You will soon be in a large "cathedral." If the sun is shining, throw some of the fine sand up in the air for great photos. This cathedral area was used for some scenes in the movie *127 Hours*, the film about canyoneer Aron Ralston being trapped by a boulder in an isolated slot canyon. (The actual event happened about 100 miles north of here.)

As you continue into the canyon, the walls begin to draw in. A little more than a mile from the start you reach Belfast Boulevard, a narrow, tall, crack. This is where most people stop. Be careful if you continue into the Boulevard. It's so dark you will need a headlamp and sometimes so narrow that you have to climb a little to get over the narrow bottom. There is not even room to put a foot down. You wouldn't want to slip and wedge yourself in there, thereby having to re-enact another much less pleasant scene from *127 Hours*!

If you research the canyons ahead of time, you will find references to "dropping into" the various forks. All these routes require ropes and technical skills. One of them drops into the far end of Belfast Boulevard from an even narrower section of slot. In places it's only a hands-width wide at the bottom few feet. Slot canyons are, of course, formed by erosion. Rainwater is channeled into a narrow area and eats away the soft sandstone. Keep this in mind if there are clouds around. Most of the erosion occurs during flash floods. You don't want to be anywhere near a canyon if that is a possibility. Fortunately, the entire drainage area for Leprechaun is visible from the road, so it's easy to see if there is a chance of rain. In some other slots, rainfall many miles away can cause floods on apparently clear, sunny days.

It's well worth a couple of hours to explore Leprechaun. An added benefit is that on a hot summer day, the narrow sections are cool. There are not usually any pools of water, but there may be muddy areas and even some patches of shallow quicksand. The area is so remote that it's likely you will have Leprechaun to yourself. If you are interested in more slot canyons, there are a series of famous slots on the Notom Road north of Sandy Ranch (R30230). These are longer and all end in very technical climbs. They are also more subject to flash floods. There are more than 1,000 named slot canyons in Utah!

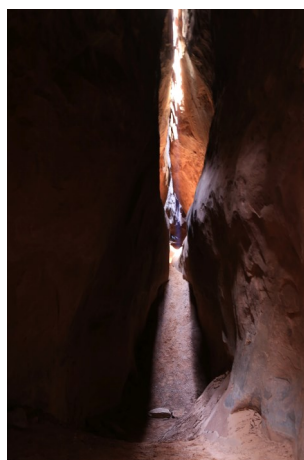
A final warning, if you camp at Sandthrax you may discover Sandthrax Canyon, also known as "The Chasm of Doom." Do not enter this canyon. It is deceptively dangerous, very technical, and very easy to get stuck in. Many people have spent the night in there. Local search and rescue crews know it well.

For an expanded version of this discovery with more pictures and maps, check out our website at [discoverytrail.org/leprechaun](http://discoverytrail.org/leprechaun).



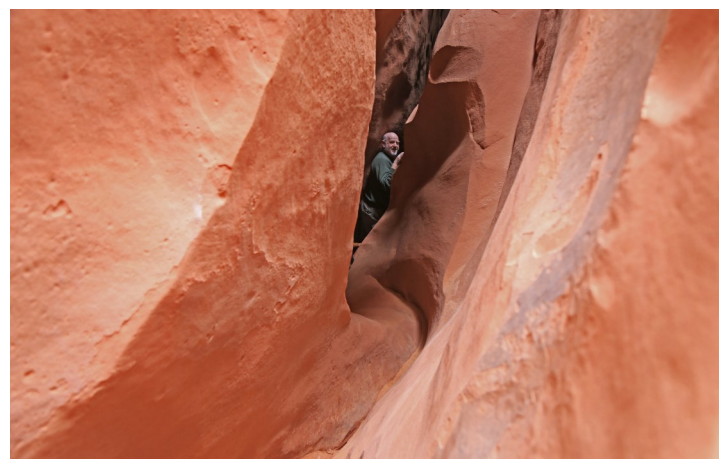
*The Cathedral area opens up after the small slot.*

Photo courtesy of Bob Palin



*Leaving the Cathedral, the canyon becomes narrower.*

Photo courtesy of Bob Palin



*Bob Palin enters the narrow Belfast Boulevard. It quickly becomes tighter and much darker.*

Photo courtesy of Bob Palin



## Eric Seaborg Recognized

By John Fazel

The Reese Lukei, Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award was named in honor of one of our founding board members and our past ADTS national coordinator. This award was first given in 2017 to Reese, and has not been presented since. Its goal is to recognize those who have gone above and beyond to help the American Discovery Trail achieve its goals.

At our recent annual meeting, we presented this award to Eric Seaborg, who has a history of ADT service that goes back more than 30 years. When the American Hiking Society (AHS) began in 1977, there was a desire to develop a cross-country trail. That led to a coast-to-coast hike by a group of hardy backpackers called Hika-Nation. In 1978, Eric's father, Dr. Glenn Seaborg, volunteered to help lay out the route in California.

HikaNation's kick-off included 7,000 people walking across the Oakland-San Francisco Bay Bridge, the first time such a walk was held. A hardy few continued all the way across the country. Among them was Susan "Butch" Henley, who later became executive director of the AHS and later of the ADT Society.

*Right: Eric Seaborg led the team that scouted the route for the ADT in 1990-91, seen here in the canyon country of Utah. From left, Eric, Sam Carlson, and Ellen Dudley.*

Photo by Al Frost

In 1989, at an AHS board meeting, there was a proposal for AHS and Backpacker Magazine to partner in developing the American Discovery Trail. At the urging of Butch Henley, Eric agreed to join (and later lead) a three-person team to cross the United States to scout the route for the trail. The scouting team met with local groups who recommended the best trails to follow and tested the route on the ground. Eric convinced his friend, Ellen Dudley, to join him in this year-long adventure. (Aside: It must have worked well because they later married.)

After completing their journey, Eric and Ellen wrote a book about their experiences, *American Discoveries*. Prior to his work with the ADT, Eric served as president of the AHS for three years, when the 1983 amendments to the National Trails System Act became law. He has served as president of the ADT Society for 18 years.

Thanks, Eric, for all you have done and continue to do for the American Discovery Trail!



## ADT Society on YouTube

If you missed the ADT Society Annual Meeting, with its presentations on the trail's history and current projects, you can still watch it online at the time of your choosing. Just point your browser to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fa6bSw-8JPY>.



Eric Seaborg was awarded the Reese Lukei, Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award for his extensive service to the American Discovery Trail Society over the last 30 years. The photo shows the award with the hills in the background that overlook the American Discovery Trail in California. Photo courtesy of John Fazel

*"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything in the universe."*  
—John Muir



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## Friendship, Indiana

(Continued from page 1)

Along with all the competitions at the Curly Gostomski Primitive Range, the festival features traders who offer a large array of goods, such as beads, baskets, ironware, knives, buckskins, traditional muzzle loaders, powder horns, and so on. If you want to dress like Davy Crockett or Daniel Boone, this is the place to buy all the necessary items.

By the way, Daniel Boone never wore a coonskin cap as depicted on the television show. He wore a wide-brimmed felt or beaver hat. Many participants in the events go to great lengths to portray the culture and lifestyle of the period that they represent. Most of them have invested thousands of dollars in their firearms, lodging, clothing, and gear.

If there is an event occurring while you are passing Friendship, be sure to stop and learn about how people lived a long time ago. You might get a bang out of it.



*If an event is not being held at the time you pass through the town of Friendship, you may see only empty campsites and the headquarters for the NMLRA.*

Photo courtesy of Jim Shaner



*Primitive campsites and vendor displays add an authentic feel to the bygone era.*

Photo courtesy of the National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association

### ***Making Connections...***

#### ***Coast to Coast***

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## Tall Discoveries



*With long-distance trail travel discouraged during the pandemic, some were still able to get out for day hikes or self-supported remote backpacking on affiliated trails that were open. This trail over Argentine Pass provided good social distancing for people and mountain goats.* Photo courtesy of Gary Swing

A cross-country trail obviously needs to include a trip over the towering Rocky Mountains. West of Denver, the American Discovery Trail travels through six national forests on trails that rise above timberline to reveal breathtaking views. The ADT crosses 15 mountain passes over 9,000 feet high, including four that are above 12,000 feet, crossing the Continental Divide three times.

You may be wondering where the American Discovery Trail reaches its highest elevation. That is on Argentine Pass (13,207 feet), between Denver and Winfield, Colo. Here, the ADT coincides with the Continental Divide Trail for nine miles. Travel on this section requires backpacking and camping in remote areas. The high altitude presents additional challenges that hikers should be aware of. It may snow any day of the year and access is often limited due to blizzard conditions and closures, so it is best to plan your trip for July or August. Physical adjustment to higher elevations may require gradual acclimation.

Some trail segments prohibit bicycles and some terrain is unsafe for bicycles. In Colorado the ADT has bicycle alternates. We recommend contacting state coordinators for advice on routes to suit your mode of travel and capabilities. But the rewards of the expansive views, possible sightings of mountain goats, and that “top of the world” feeling, can be well worth the effort.

## Worth Mentioning

The Rails to Trails Conservancy’s January trail blog lists their Top Ten Trails in West Virginia. Included are two trails that are part of the American Discovery Trail.

One is the North Bend Rail Trail, which includes 60 ADT miles. The other is the Harrison Rail Trail, which has 12.6 miles of grass and gravel treadway that allows horse, bicycle, and pedestrian use. Both are excellent ways to enjoy West Virginia’s mountains without steep climbs.

## Email Addresses Wanted

The ADT Society works continually to keep our membership email list up to date so we can provide timely trail information and other announcements.

**WE WILL NOT SELL IT TO OTHER SOURCES.** We use your information only for internal communication or so your state coordinator could contact you about items of local interest.

Email addresses are also required for members to be able to attend any future ADT Society membership meetings by Zoom.

Please send your name and email address to [info@discoverytrail.org](mailto:info@discoverytrail.org) so we can make sure you are on our list correctly.