

Ozark Trail Association

July 30, 2020

There's Never Enough Thanks

Sitting here today, I wonder what the next few months will bring. Knowing how we have been impacted by all the changes in the past months, sometimes I wonder how we will continue but I know that with the support of our volunteers and partners that we will see the Ozark Trail to continue to be a destination for so many. In the new reality, the only thing that seems to be absolute is that there will be significant changes, almost daily, as we move into our fall maintenance and construction season.

During the peak of the lockdown, we have tried to continue to encourage our trail adopters to safely visit their sections, as well as other volunteers who have stepped up to take on the challenges. From exponential seasonal vegetation growth to massive storm damage that potentially would have made utilizing the OT difficult, along with Covid-19, these trail guardians stepped up and made sure that these issues were addressed, as well as being reported, so that we can continue our mission.

I wish we had a crystal ball to look to the future, but I know deep down that we all believe in what we do in action and words concerning the trail that we are all passionate about and love. As a challenge, I ask you to reach out to someone that may not have the opportunity to hike a trail or be in nature and let them experience what we love that brings us back to the forest every chance we get.

In closing, there is never enough thanks to each of you that have given so much in the past weeks and years. Be safe and stay healthy. Life isn't getting easier or more forgiving. We just need to be stronger and more resilient.

Kathie Brennan
President



Rising to the Challenge...

When two major high wind storm events greatly impacted the Eleven Point, Wappapello, and Between the Rivers sections on May 3rd and 4th, 2020, causing extensive damage to the OT, we were the first volunteer organization to step-up.

After reaching out to the Mark Twain National Forest to offer assistance in any way our volunteers could, a call for help was made and our OTA volunteers answered! Twenty-one volunteers from as far away as Kansas City, Arkansas, and Tennessee responded over a three week period to assess the damage and remove, as humanly possible, hundreds of blown down trees.

An impressive 53+ miles of trail were assessed for damage then 35+ miles were cleared resulting in 800 volunteer-hours at an estimated value of \$20,344 in support of our partner agencies.

Matt Dillon, District Ranger on the Eleven Point Ranger District said, "Their vigilant efforts assist with keeping the Ozark Trail open through maintenance and emergency response. The OTA also plays an important role in conservation education and advocacy."

Oh, the Places We'll Go!

Each spring, we look forward to multiple maintenance and construction events to keep the OT in the best shape it can be. As we move forward into the trail maintenance season, we will continue to keep our volunteers safe as we deal with Covid-19. Because of canceling the



majority of our events this past spring, the OTA has had to rely upon our partnership with **AmeriCorps St. Louis** crews. These weekly trail crews have tackled maintenance and construction projects that OTA volunteers would have participated in. As we look forward to modifying our programs to offer the safest

experience possible for volunteers, safety is our biggest concern in how we interact with each other. Please note that our fall schedule of events, including fundraising, will be very fluid with the uncertainty of the future. Be sure to check out our upcoming ***schedule of events*** on the ***website*** as it is updated.

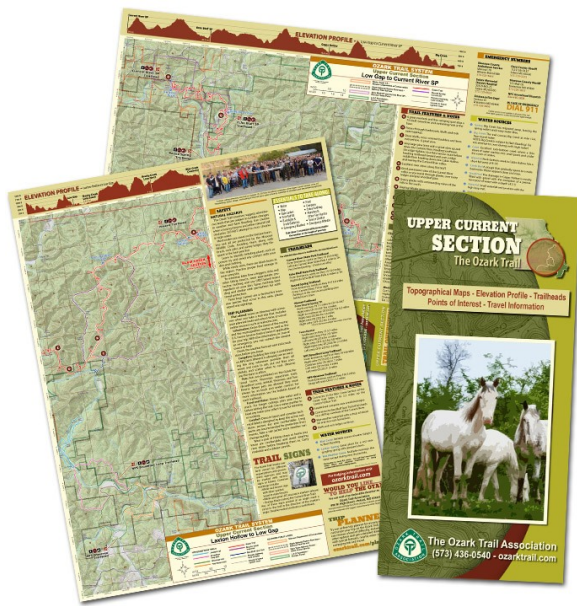
OT... Out There

The OT is both a physical resource and a unifying idea that connects users from all walks of life. Because of the ruggedness and remoteness of the trail, everyone's hike is unique by experiencing various elements during each visit to the OT. These include encounters with nature, challenges, being self-reliant, and making that connection to the forest. The experience one encounters could include wildlife and, most recently... bears. Due to the increasing number of bear encounters along the OT, we strongly recommend the use of bear canisters by everyone staying overnight on the OT.



Challenges also include the impact of humans where good decisions are needed so that everyone can enjoy the trail without having to pick up after others. Even without formal training, the principles of Leave No Trace are really just common sense. We all want to leave the places we love better than we found them. Even though we may practice LNT, wildlife and especially bears, will possibly become acclimated to finding leftover foods. Our decisions are our choices. Some have a greater negative impact than others. Learn more about Leave No Trace at <https://lnt.org/>

MAPS NOW AVAILABLE



Just completed in October 2019, the Upper Current section is ready to be explored in all its remoteness and beauty! These maps are waterproof and tear resistant providing a plethora of information from elevation profiles, trailheads, points of interest, traveler information and more. Your purchase of maps supports the work of our OTA volunteers.

Visit our Store

Fall Events Calendar

- August 22:** Crew Leader Training - watch for details!
- August 29:** OTA Quarterly Board Zoom Meeting - Noon
- August 29:** OT Council Zoom Meeting - 10am
- September 6/7:** OT Challenge Hike Prep
- September 12:** OT Challenge Hike Fundraiser
- September 19:** OT-OHT Connection Kick-Off at Dawt/Udall
- September 24/25:** Ozarks One-Eyed Dog MTB Race Prep
- September 26:** Ozarks One-Eyed Dog MTB Race
- October 3:** Fall Mega Prep
- October 10:** Fall Mega at Bass' River Resort
- October 17:** Whoopin' It Up In Winona
- October 24:** Somewhere Out There Maintenance
- October 31:** Upper Current Section Maintenance
- November 5/6:** OT 100 Mile Endurance Run Prep
- November 7:** OT 100 Mile Endurance Run Support

For details about these events and to see all scheduled outings, plus sign up, click [here](#).

A large portion of our work is funded directly from supporters like you.

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I'd like to become a member or renew my membership with the Ozark Trail Association!

MEMBERSHIP



*develop, maintain, preserve,
promote & protect
the rugged, natural beauty of the Ozark Trail*



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