

VISIT MISSOURI TRAILS

by Jan Neitzert

In April of 2013, Missouri was named the “Best Trails State” by American Trails (AT), an independent trails advocacy organization. AT recognized the state’s commitment to the development, preservation, diversity and responsible utilization when making its selection for this two-year award. Shortly thereafter, Gov. Jeremiah (Jay) Nixon launched a celebratory initiative: 100 Missouri Miles. In under seven months, more than 13,000 Missourians logged more than 1.2 million miles on Missouri’s trails – land and water – walking, biking, paddling or on horseback! What a tremendous accomplishment, enjoying Missouri’s community connections, drinking in our natural beauty and improving health at the same time!

On March 19, Gov. Nixon and First Lady Georganne Nixon announced year two of the 100 Missouri – Miles Challenge, addressing a group at Rock Bridge Memorial State Park, followed by a 1.3-mile hike! To hear what the Governor and First Lady had to say, visit <http://bit.ly/1hoSMdW> for a video of the event.

Missouri’s state parks, national parks and national forests boast a wealth of wonderful opportunities to immerse yourself in nature – providing a wide variety of ways to be physically



Photo courtesy of Missouri State Parks.

active and have fun. However, many miles of trails are found within the boundaries of city, county and regional park departments and districts. Making sure these resources are kept accessible and safe are huge responsibilities.

It was in 2010 at the Missouri Municipal League’s Annual Conference

that attendees first heard about the Missouri Trail Alliance – group of passionate trail enthusiasts desiring to capitalize on the tremendous breadth and depth of our trail opportunities. This group of trail users and managers saw the potential for the country, and the world, to find out about Missouri’s trails in order to better enjoy them.

Over the past three years, with contributions from a number of partner organizations, the Alliance has been working to establish a web-based resource that will be a “one stop shop” for trail users looking for a specific type of experience. Whether an equestrian, mountain-biker, bird-watcher, marathoner-in-training or just a casual walker – it’s all out there!

This website, launched Spring 2014, exhibits the ground floor of this amazing resource – searchable by all the criteria mentioned above and much more. As more agencies and organizations upload their data, it will grow to become the premier resource for those looking for a local activity or for those coming to America just to “hit the trails!”

Looking for a trail that suits your schedule, your location, your ability? Look no further than www.visitmissouritrails.com! □

Jan Neitzert has served as the executive director of the Missouri Park & Recreation Association since 2008. MPRA’s offices are located in Jefferson City where they serve as an advocate and resource to parks and recreation departments throughout the state.

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