

NEWS RELEASE



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Date: May 15, 2004	Kill Date: May 30, 2004	Email: kswanson@fs.fed.us

VOLUNTEERS COMPLETE NEW ONE MILE SECTION OF OZARK TRAIL

POTOSI, Mo. -- Volunteers were busy May 3-7, 2004 working through Mark Twain National Forest near Bixby building a new section of the Ozark Trail. The new 1- mile trail section is now part of the Middle River Section of the 350-mile Ozark Trail.

“The goal is to have a 500-mile trail through scenic areas of the Ozarks from St Louis to the Arkansas border where it will connect to the Ozark Highland Trail in northern Arkansas,” according to Kris Swanson, resource staff officer for Mark Twain National Forest. “When completed, the two trails will total 700 miles.”

The new trail section was constructed by hand by members of the Ozark Trail Association and American Hiking Society. The trail had to be built by hand because a unique wetland was nearby, said Acting Potosi Ranger District Ranger Janet Fraley.

Gwen and Dave Fuehring, Maryland Heights, Missouri organized the working vacation. Volunteers camped at the Council Bluff Recreation Area near Potosi. Members from American Hiking Society came to south central Missouri from six states and Canada to join forces with members of the Ozark Trail Association. Volunteers included a 78-year old man from California, a woman from Ontario, Canada and one couple from Indiana who have volunteered more than 40 weeks building hiking trails. “Almost every weekend we have volunteers out working on the Ozark Trail,” said John Roth, of the Ozark Trails Association. “Besides building new trails, volunteers maintain and reconstruct existing trails. It was great that volunteers from the American Hiking Society chose to come to the Missouri Ozarks and spend a week building a trail.”

“We enjoyed hosting this working group from the American Hiking Society and Ozark Trail Association,” Swanson said. “The section of trail is restricted to hiking, but many sections of the Ozark Trail are open for horseback and mountain bike riding. Some of the volunteers who worked on the trail haven’t been to this part of Missouri before and were surprised by the beauty of the Ozarks.”

Individuals or groups who want to volunteer to help with the Ozark Trail can contact the Ozark Trail Association or Mark Twain National Forest at: 573-364-4621 or visit the Ozark Trail Website at www.ozarktrail.com.

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Mark Twain National Forest District Rangers are: **Ava** Jenny Farenbaugh (417) 683-4428
Doniphan Jerry Bird (573) 996-2153 **Poplar Bluff** Henry Hickerson (573) 785-1475 **Potosi** Janet
Fraley (573) 438-5427 **Houston/Rolla** John Bisbee (417) 967-4194 **Salem** Tom Haines (573) 729-6656

Photo Caption:

BIXBY, Mo. -- David McDonald of Michigan helps construct a new section of the Ozark Trail. McDonald is one of the American Hiking Society and Ozark Trail Association members to build by hand May 3-7, 2004 a one-mile section of hiking trail near Bixby, Missouri. The Ozark Trail is planned to be a 500 mile trail from St. Louis to Arkansas. Currently 350 miles of trail have been completed. (USDA Photo by Charles Gill)