

River-to River Trail Society Announces Spring Hiking Schedule

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The River-to-River Trail Society announces that this spring it will once again offer a schedule of guided hikes in and near the Shawnee National Forest. All hikes are free and open to the public. Although the hikes vary in level of difficulty, all are intended for people in good health who have done some hiking in the past. Hiking sticks and boots or sturdy shoes are strongly recommended. All hikers should bring their own water and a snack. No dogs, please.

In order to protect the health of leaders and hikers, a number of temporary special procedures will be in effect during the coronavirus emergency and are mandatory. All groups will be limited to no more than twenty hikers. In order to achieve that goal, all hikes will require advance registration with the hike leader. Further information will be available a week before the scheduled hike in the press, on the Society's website rivertorivertrail.net, and on the Society's Facebook page. Please do not call hike leaders before the Monday preceding the hike. Starting times and meeting places will be communicated to registrants over the telephone. All hikers must bring a face mask capable of covering their nose, mouth, and chin. NO MASK, NO HIKE. While hikers need not wear face masks while hiking, they must wear them when standing near other hikers or when passing on the trail. Proper social distance must be maintained whenever possible. Because the route of all hikes will be either a loop or out-and-back, the Society will not provide any transportation. All hikers will be responsible for transporting themselves to the trailhead, where all will be expected to sign a waiver of liability. Any other conditions required by executive order of the Governor or recommendations of the CDC must be complied with.

The Society's first hike will be on Saturday, March 13, from Phantoms Canyon to Cedar Falls, in Pope County. This hike will be on private property, and the Society appreciates the generous permission of Camp Ondessonk and the Diocese of Belleville for this hike. The leader will be Greg Santen, Guest Services Director, Camp Ondessonk. To register, call (630) 470-7692.

On Saturday, March 20, Todd Carr will lead a hike on the Jackson Hole to Peter's Cave waterfall loop, in Pope County. To register, call (618) 499-9629 on or after March 15.

For the Society's third hike, on Saturday, March 27, Bill Gilmour will lead a hike in the Gum Springs area, in Johnson County. To register, call (270) 331-1553, on or after March 22.

On Saturday, April 3, Mark Motsinger will lead a hike at and near Millstone Bluff, in Pope County. To register, call (618) 269-0369, on or after March 29.

The Society's fifth hike will be on Saturday, April 10, on the Snake Road, in Union County. The leader will be Shawn Gossman. To register, call (618) 694-7034, on or after April 5.

On Saturday, April 17, Gillum Ferguson will lead a hike at Ferne Clyffe State Park, in Union County. To register, call (630) 470-7692, on or after April 12.

The Society's seventh hike of the season will be on Saturday, April 24. Bob Mulcahy will lead a hike at Kinkaid Lake in Jackson County. To register, call (708) 471-7500, on or after April 19.

The Society's eighth and final scheduled hike of the season will be on Saturday, May 1. Fred Scott will lead a hike on Trail 146 in Gallatin County. To register, call (618) 841-4838, on or after April 26.

The River-to-River Trail is a hiking and equestrian trail which stretches 157 miles through Southern Illinois between Elizabethtown on the Ohio River and Grand Tower on the Mississippi. The River-to-River Trail Society is an Illinois not-for-profit corporation, founded by John O'Dell in 1993. All its work is done by unpaid volunteers. Besides its program of free public hikes, the Society engages in trail maintenance and advocacy, and publishes an online guidebook to the entire River-to-River Trail, which can be downloaded free of charge at the Society's website: rivertorivertrail.net. Patches for the Society can be purchased for \$5.00 during the Society's public hikes. Because the Society is a federally recognized charitable organization, donations are tax deductible to the extent provided by law,