

Friday
April 21, 2017



63/51
Today
Partly cloudy



54/43
Saturday
Chance of shower



65/42
Sunday
Clouds decrease

STORMCENTER 7

Full forecast by
Eric Elwell, C6



Radio: Updates on AM
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GET ACTIVE

‘Outdoor Capital of the Midwest’ going INTERNATIONAL

ACB

By Debbie Juniewicz
Contributing Writer

By foot, by bike or by boat, local outdoor enthusiasts get around.

With a 300-plus mile paved recreation trail network and six high-quality waterways offering 400 miles of paddling opportunities, the Dayton area has long been recognized as a local gem but, now, the “Outdoor Capital of the Midwest” is reaching international status as Dayton - in conjunction with American Trails - will host the 23rd International Trails Symposium May 7-10.

“The variety of trails and trail types was impressive and the fact that there are trails right downtown sold me immediately,” said Candace Mitchell, director of operations for American Trails. “We rely heavily on the host committee, so it’s helpful to have strong local support and contacts. And I’ve never seen as many support letters as I did in Dayton’s bid packet.”

To say the symposium is a team effort would be an understatement as seven local organizations - along with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources - are joining forces with American Trails as formal partners to make this event a success. Five Rivers MetroParks is the lead organization locally but the City of Dayton, Dayton Convention and Visitors Bureau, Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, Miami Conservancy District, Greene County Parks & Trail



There are more than 60 miles of local mountain bike trails.

and the Miami County Park District are all playing a part in hosting the event that is expected to infuse more than \$1 million into the local economy.

“It’s an amazing collaborative approach we’re taking,” said Amy Dingle, Five Rivers MetroParks Director of Outdoor Connections. “We’re really jazzed about this. It will help us provide more credibility to the region and increase the awareness of our trails.”

The four-day event - held primarily at the Dayton Convention Center - is expected to bring in participants from across the country as well as at least 11 other countries. Many of the sessions are geared toward those who work for federal

agencies and non-profits as well as trail builders, planners and managers, but many events are open to the public.

“This is a big deal for Dayton,” said Andy Niekamp, of the Dayton Hikers. “The International Trail Symposium celebrates all trails - including hiking, cycling, mountain biking, horse trails and ATV trails. And there are several ways the public can get involved.”

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Two family-friendly large-scale events will help kick off the symposium - a free public event at the Convention Center on May 7 and the Trails Rock Party on May 8 at RiverScape MetroPark.



The Dayton region is home to the largest bikeway network in the United States with more than 300 miles of paved, off-street, connected bikeways. CONTRIBUTED

Both events are free and open to the public.

Mobile workshops - essentially interactive field trips that range from paddling to pier building - are another great way to get involved. And mobile workshop participants don’t need to be registered for the symposium.

Local outdoor enthusiasts can also get involved as volunteers - earning themselves a sporty “Trail Boss” T-shirt, enjoying refreshments and receiving free admission to various sessions in exchange for their time. There are more than 250 volunteer spots to fill.

“This event showcases what a special place this is but, beyond the trails, the thing that is most amazing is the collaborative spirit,” Dingle said. “We’re working together as a community.”

Learn More about the International Trail Symposium

■ About the ITS: <http://www.americantrails.org/ee/index.php/symposium/2017>



The region is home to 400 miles of water trails.

www.americantrails.org/ee/index.php/symposium/2017

■ Mobile workshops: <http://americantrails.org/ee/index.php/symposium/2017-MobileWorkshops>

■ Volunteering: <http://www.signupgenius.com/tabs/53176DB00A6CDE5C60-its-volunteer>

■ Full Session Schedule: <http://www.americantrails.org/ee/index.php/symposium/2017-sessions>

www.americantrails.org/ee/index.php/symposium/2017-sessions

Dayton: The Outdoor Adventure Capital of the Midwest

A few facts about outdoor recreation in the Dayton area:

■ Largest bikeway network in the country with more than 300 miles

JOIN THE FUN AT THE INTERNATIONAL TRAILS SYMPOSIUM

Free Public Event

What: Family fun with adventure presentations, exhibits, indoor climbing wall, pumptrack, RiverMobile traveling exhibit, replica WrightFlyer plane, silent auction, ponies and more

When: Sunday, May 7, noon-5 p.m.

Where: Dayton Convention Center, 22 E. 5th St.

Cost: Free

TRAILS ROCK PARTY

What: An evening of live music, food, craft beer and entertainment. Spend time with outdoor adventurers from around the world.

When: Monday, May 8, 7-11 p.m.

Where: RiverScape MetroPark

Cost: Party is free; food and beverages available for purchase

■ League of American Bicyclists’ Bronze-level BicycleFriendly Community

■ Three state-designated water trails

■ More than 60 miles of mountain biking trails, including the award-winning MetroParks Mountain Bike Area (MoMBA)

■ Six high-quality waterways offering 400 miles of paddling opportunities, including on the nation’s first National Scenic River

■ Mad River Run whitewater feature

■ More than 200 miles of hiking trails

■ Award-winning Twin Valley Backpacking Trail

■ Designated Trail Town of the North Country National Scenic-Trail and Buckeye Trail.

■ More than 40 outdoor clubs

■ More than 45 outdoor retailers

Contact this contributing writer at djuniewicz@gmail.com.



The region is home to more than 200 miles of hiking trails. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS