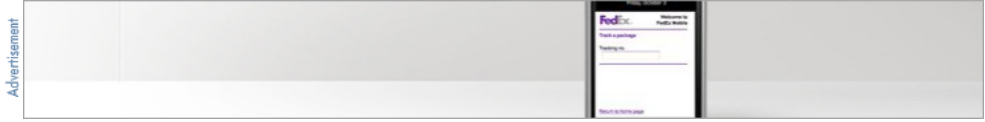


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Coming and Going: Great U.S. Hiking Trails

Sunday, May 24, 2009

GREAT OUTDOORS

Go Hug a Trail

On June 6, the American Hiking Society will hold its 17th annual *National Trails Day*, which honors America's natural roadways and encourages citizens to lace up and hit the trail. This year, organizers are planning more than 1,500 events across the country, including moonlight hikes, trail maintenance, paddling excursions, clinics and more. (For a list, see <http://www.americanhiking.org>.) However, just as moms and veterans deserve more than just one day of recognition, trails do as well. CoGo asked Ed Talone, a trail information specialist at the Silver Spring-based American Hiking Society, to recommend five routes that are a cause for celebration any day of the year. Here are his suggestions.

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* *Acoma-Zuni Trail*, in New Mexico's El Malpais National Monument and Conservation Area: The trail, which runs about eight miles across volcanic rock, was marked as a trade route between the pueblos of the Zuni and Acoma Indians 1,000 years ago; ancient rock cairns placed by the original trekkers are still in place. According to Talone, the trail is a standout because of "the chance to walk through a volcanic landscape. It's beautiful." Info: 505-783-4774, <http://www.nps.gov/elma/planyourvisit/index.htm>.

* *Big Cypress National Preserve*, in South Florida: The route, which covers 38 miles of the 1,400-mile Florida National Scenic Trail, is speckled with twisted, stunted cypress trees, carpeted with a "river of grass" and populated by black bears, alligators, osprey and egrets. "It's so vast. You can look out and your eye goes forever. There is nothing but waving grass," Talone said. And when it rains, "it's like walking through a shallow ocean." Info: 239-695-1201, <http://www.nps.gov/bicy>.

* *Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) Canal*, between Little Orleans, Md., and the Paw Paw Tunnel: The 15-mile expanse along the popular towpath connecting the District and Cumberland, Md., boasts the Paw Paw Tunnel, a 3,118-foot-long brick structure built by hand

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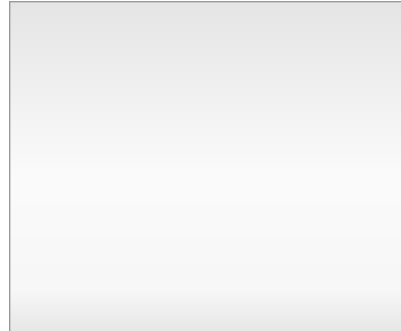
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and completed in 1850. "It may be the most remote section of the C&O Canal." Info: 301-739-4200, <http://www.nps.gov/CHOH>.

* *Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore*, in Michigan: Part of the North Country National Scenic Trail (4,200 miles from New York to North Dakota), the Michigan leg travels for 30-odd miles along Lake Superior. Highlights include towering sand dunes, the Au Sable Light Station, white birch forests and, of course, the great lake itself. "You really see the power of Lake Superior, with the trees bending and the lake roaring. It's almost primeval." Info: 906-387-2607, <http://www.nps.gov/piro/historyculture/index.htm>.

* *Route of the Hiawatha*, in Idaho: The biking and hiking trail follows the path of old railroad tracks, since removed, that once carried passengers and cargo across the Bitterroot Mountains, on the Idaho-Montana border. The 15-miler features seven trestles and 11 tunnels, including the 1.7-mile-long St. Paul Pass. "If you want to see one rails-to-trails in this country, this is the one. It's like walking in the clouds." Info: 208-744-1301, <http://www.ridethehiawatha.com/hiawatha>.

TRAVEL TICKERS


Summer must be coming because . . . *Water Taxi Beach* on Long Island City opened yesterday, with *free shuttles* between the beach and East 35th Street in Manhattan. Boats operate 8 p.m.-2 a.m. Fridays and 8 p.m.-3 a.m. Saturdays. During the day, you'll have to find other means of transportation, such as the New York Water Taxi. The faux-tropical escape closes on Columbus Day. Info: <http://www.watertaxibeach.com>. . . Marriott Golf is offering servicemen and women *reduced greens and cart fees* with its new Fairway Furloughs program, valid year-round. Active, reserve and retired *military personnel* can play (after 3 p.m.) at any of 26 Marriott golf courses for \$29 to \$69, depending on the destination and season. Participating courses include Camelback Golf Club in Scottsdale, Ariz.; Doral Golf Resort & Spa in Miami; and Kauai Lagoons Golf Club in Lihue, Hawaii. Info: <http://www.marriottgolf.com>. . . *Civil War history* buffs will want to check out a new book by Michael Weeks, "The Complete Civil War Road Trip Guide" (Countryman Press, \$19.95), which includes detailed information on nearly 450 sites of interest, as well as 10 itineraries for exploration. For more information, <http://www.countrymanpress.com>. . . In a confluence of events we'd never imagined, *Virgin America*, which recently became the first airline to offer inflight cocktails made with the previously banned *absinthe*, is now the first to offer (paid) *WiFi* on all of its flights. Consider the possibilities!

BARGAIN OF THE WEEK


Air France is offering *summer sale fares* to *Europe*. For example, fare from Washington *Dulles to Paris* is \$683 *round trip*, including \$115 taxes; other airlines are matching. Travel June 18-Sept. 22. Cheapest fares apply to Monday-Thursday flights. Seven-day advance purchase required; minimum stay is Sunday night and maximum stay is one month. Book by June 16 at <http://www.airfrance.us>.


Reporting: Andrea Sachs, Scott Vogel


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