

The Long, Long, Well-Hidden Trail

(EDITOR'S NOTE: With the summer vacation time all but upon us, The Michigan Horseback Riding and Hiking Trail would be a good place to spend it -- if you're the adventuresome kind and yearn to get closer to nature. Southfield News and Observer staff writer Corinne Abatt rode the trail recently and brought back some impressions.)

By CORINNE ABATT

There's an undiscovered beauty in the northern part of the lower peninsula. A picturesque hiking and riding trail connects Michigan's east and west shores. It was developed as a result of state legislation in 1964 providing for a state system of trails for horseback riders and hikers.

It ranks, in foresight and imaginative concept, with the east coast's Appalachian trail and the west coast's Pacific Crest trail. Like those two better known ones, it is a pioneering effort to provide an adventuresome and challenging recreational facility.

BUT ONE OF the problems has been getting detailed information on the trail. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources offers a brochure on the trail which

contains a map, a list of distances between trail points, names of ranches servicing the trail and campground locations.

The map shows two starting points on the west shore of Michigan -- Empire and Elberta. These two join at the Mud Lake State Forest, a distance of about 25 miles. The trail meanders across the state for a total of some 210 miles to Tawas on the Lake Huron shore.

There are two tangent trails, one which starts south of Traverse City and goes to Cadillac and another from Grayling to somewhere east of Indian River.

The map and the trail stops are not enough for someone unfamiliar with the trail area. Many questions face those who would like to use the trail. Is there available drinking water? What is the condition



A GROUP OF riders and guide stop just off the trail in a sunny meadow to rest horses and look at the scenery. The area south of Traverse City is characterized by rolling hills and thick forests.



HIKERS START on Michigan's hiking and riding trail, certain that for the 120 mile stretch they won't see more than a handful of cars. At a few points the trail follows the dirt roads, but mostly it cuts through woods, follows the high path along the ridges of the rolling hills and is passable only for hikers and horses.

Since the Boy Scouts had helped develop the trail, a call to the Detroit area Boy Scout Council was helpful. They furnished the name of a leader who had taken 10 scouts across the entire trail last July.

Scout Leader Frank Slaughter, of Sterling Heights, spent almost a year trying to get information on the trail.

One of the groups most involved in the development and use of the trail is the Michigan Trail Riders. While their very complete book on the trail, available for \$5, is primarily aimed at trail riders, much of the information on trail facilities would be of value to hikers. The book also includes 12 well marked county maps.

The Trail Riders Assn. address is: Route 2 Box 434, Suttons Bay, Mich., 49682.

"IT WASN'T until I got information from the Trail Riders Assn. that I had anything to go on," said Slaughter.

It took his party of scouts and leaders 12 days to hike the 210 miles. One of the adults in the group drove a car with supplies to the next camping

site each morning so the problem of transporting tents, groceries and sleeping bags was solved. He didn't have any suggestions on how a family group might accomplish the same feat.

Slaughter said the trail is scenic, especially at the eastern end and rough walking in some areas. He suggested sturdy hiking shoes. He was amused to find that while some of the trail campgrounds were practically empty, state park campgrounds nearby were full to overflowing.

FINDING AND exploring the trail were obviously going to be the only satisfactory way to bridge the information gap. We headed for Traverse City with the names of several foresters, two members of the Trail Riders Assn. and the brochure.

The officers of the Trail Riders Association were out of town when we arrived on a rainy Sunday afternoon as was the forester at the branch

office of the Department of Natural Resources.

It began to "like the "wrong time and the wrong place" syndrome was working overtime until an off-duty forester dropped by the department and was able to help.

He suggested we drive to one of the dude ranches on the trail about 15 miles south of Traverse City, stay overnight and look around. The fact that the ranches had overnight accommodations was enlightening and not mentioned in the brochure.

We found Ranch Rudolph in the Traverse City phone book, called for reservations and stopped by the Park Place Motel in Traverse City for directions to the ranch. The motel recently leased the ranch. Even in a heavy rain, the dirt roads leading to the ranch were easy driving. On both sides of the road are magnificent state forests, thick with oak, pine and beech.

The rolling hills and broad valleys are reminiscent of the Great Smoky Mountains.

The ranch was one of nine listed in the brochure as having camping facilities and renting and boarding horses. The ranch, itself, does not have a camping area, but there is a trail campground, Scheek's, nearby.

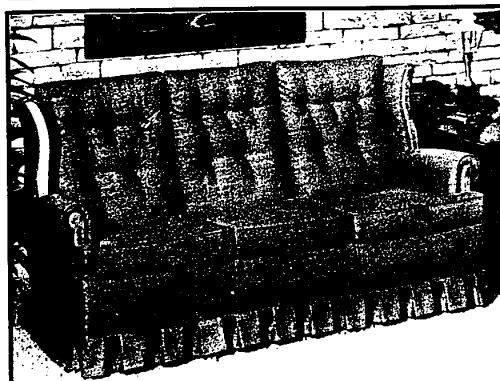
The ranch was one of nine listed in the brochure as having camping facilities and renting and boarding horses. The ranch, itself, does not have a camping area, but there is a trail campground, Scheek's, nearby.

The ranch was one of nine listed in the brochure as having camping facilities and renting and boarding horses. The ranch, itself, does not have a camping area, but there is a trail campground, Scheek's, nearby.

The ranch was one of nine listed in the brochure as having camping facilities and renting and boarding horses. The ranch, itself, does not have a camping area, but there is a trail campground, Scheek's, nearby.



TRAIL HIKER Andrew Dempster, of Ann Arbor, can see room for improvements on the trail, but hopes it won't become too comfortable and over-populated.



SPRING TIME SAVINGS

Early American SOFA \$168.

MATCHING LOVE SEAT 128.

CHAIR 78.

Tufted button back, 3 cushions, 4" foam cushions, coil spring construction, dry selected hardwood oak, maple finished panels, pleated skirt.

Choice of colors in pleids and solids in Herculon 100% nylon or fabric supported expanded vinyl including arm covers and self platform.

LAUREL Furniture Co.

584 W. ANN ARBOR TRAIL
Between Lilley Road & Mill St.
PLYMOUTH



HOURS:
MON., TUES., WED., SAT.
9:30 - 6:00 P.M.
THURS. & FRI.
9:30 - 9:00 P.M.

EASY BUDGET TERMS

The ranch was one of nine listed in the brochure as having camping facilities and renting and boarding horses. The ranch, itself, does not have a camping area, but there is a trail campground, Scheek's, nearby.

The ranch was one of nine listed in the brochure as having camping facilities and renting and boarding horses. The ranch, itself, does not have a camping area, but there is a trail campground, Scheek's, nearby.

The ranch was one of nine listed in the brochure as having camping facilities and renting and boarding horses. The ranch, itself, does not have a camping area, but there is a trail campground, Scheek's, nearby.

The ranch was one of nine listed in the brochure as having camping facilities and renting and boarding horses. The ranch, itself, does not have a camping area, but there is a trail campground, Scheek's, nearby.

The ranch was one of nine listed in the brochure as having camping facilities and renting and boarding horses. The ranch, itself, does not have a camping area, but there is a trail campground, Scheek's, nearby.

The ranch was one of nine listed in the brochure as having camping facilities and renting and boarding horses. The ranch, itself, does not have a camping area, but there is a trail campground, Scheek's, nearby.

The ranch was one of nine listed in the brochure as having camping facilities and renting and boarding horses. The ranch, itself, does not have a camping area, but there is a trail campground, Scheek's, nearby.

The ranch was one of nine listed in the brochure as having camping facilities and renting and boarding horses. The ranch, itself, does not have a camping area, but there is a trail campground, Scheek's, nearby.

The ranch was one of nine listed in the brochure as having camping facilities and renting and boarding horses. The ranch, itself, does not have a camping area, but there is a trail campground, Scheek's, nearby.

The ranch was one of nine listed in the brochure as having camping facilities and renting and boarding horses. The ranch, itself, does not have a camping area, but there is a trail campground, Scheek's, nearby.

The ranch was one of nine listed in the brochure as having camping facilities and renting and boarding horses. The ranch, itself, does not have a camping area, but there is a trail campground, Scheek's, nearby.

The ranch was one of nine listed in the brochure as having camping facilities and renting and boarding horses. The ranch, itself, does not have a camping area, but there is a trail campground, Scheek's, nearby.

LIT Honors Local Students

FARMINGTON

Three Farmington residents have been named to the current dean's honor roll at Lawrence Institute of Technology in Southfield for academic excellence in the college.

They are: Henry Ware Jr., an electrical engineering student, who lives at 31860 Nottingham; Raymond C. Ahlgren Jr., and electrical engineering student, 36973 Heatherston; and Daniel K. Neuwander, an electrical engineering student, who lives at 23111 Albion.