



Free Adventure!

Inspiration, information and recreation at Adventure Summit

By Kristen Wicker - February 11, 2014  
Dayton City Paper



*The Adventure Summit offers rock climbing, slacklining, scuba and other sports at Wright State University Feb. 14-15*

Dayton resident Andy Niekamp has taken such adventures as hiking hundreds of miles on the Colorado Trail and the Appalachian Trail, along with hiking from Cincinnati to Cleveland on the Ohio to Erie Trail. Dayton native Kristen Schafer and her mother hiked 300 miles on the El Camino de Santiago last summer. Both were inspired by their experiences at past installments of The Adventure Summit (TAS).

TAS, the Midwest's largest expo of outdoor skill and culture, returns Feb. 14-15, and you only have to hike to Wright State University to attend this free event. It includes hands-on activities, presentations by world renowned and local adventurers, competitions and an expo with more than 50 vendors.

“The Adventure Summit is an excellent way to figure out all the recreation opportunities we have in Dayton, and it's all under one roof,” said Niekamp, who volunteers at TAS. “We have a strong outdoor recreation presence in Dayton, and the summit fosters an environment that encourages people to get out and pursue outdoor recreation and push their limits.”

Niekamp's inspiration even went beyond his hiking escapades: His participation in TAS also inspired him to start a small business, Outdoor Adventure Connection, and an online club called Dayton Hikers.

Schafer also found inspiration at TAS. She attended twice as a student at Ohio University, helped plan the event two years ago and this year will be presenting about her Camino hike.

“It inspires you to see someone who is doing this big adventure, and you want to also take a big risk,” said Schafer, who now works at an outdoor school near Asheville, N.C., that provides hands-on experiential science classes.

“At one of the events I attended while a student, a friend and I were toying with idea of taking a European backpacking trip. We attended a session called ‘Hike for Your Life,’ [...] and that was the first time I thought, ‘This is something I really want to do,’ and I really found inspiration. It translated into the Camino. Now, I want to go back and hike another one of the Caminos.”

Tom Helbig, outdoor recreation special events and development coordinator for Five Rivers MetroParks, which coproduces the event with Wright State University, said he hears from people all the time who came to TAS and then went on a big adventure.

“A group of Boy Scouts came two years ago and attended a session about how to plan a long bike trip, and then they biked the Great Allegheny Passage and C&O Canal Towpath as a troop,” Helbig said. “We want to encourage people who need that push to take an adventure of a lifetime to get motivated now and stop waiting until next year.”

The event is designed for adventurers of all levels, and more hands-on activities, workshops, clinics and competitions have been added to TAS this year.

“Beginners have an opportunity to take a workshop, try activities and hear from locals who have done cool things in the outdoors so it can be a gateway to outdoor activity,” Helbig said. “People also like the variety of speakers we have and having access to 50 speakers who are local and national outdoor pros.”

This year's TAS also will focus on efforts to grow paddling opportunities in the Dayton area, including a panel discussion and presentations by keynote speakers well known in the international paddling community.

“We are pleased to offer this event, which highlights the many ways Dayton, Ohio, is the Outdoor Adventure Capital of the Midwest,” said Five Rivers MetroParks Executive Director

Becky Benná. “Attendees always leave feeling inspired to adventure outdoors in their hometowns and consider planning more extensive outdoor adventures away from home.”

### **The Adventure Summit 2014 Highlights**

- This year’s keynote speakers are David Cornthwaite and Jon Turk. Cornthwaite is a British adventurer who has broken five world records. He also is the founder of Expedition 1000: 25 Unique and Non-Motorized Journeys of 1,000 Miles or More, which has taken him on such adventures as skateboarding across Australia and swimming the length of the Lower Missouri River. Turk has spent 40 years wandering exotic and remote landscapes. He is a long-distance sea kayaker and was named the *National Geographic* Top 10 Adventurer of the Year in 2012 and *Canoe & Kayak* Expedition of the Year in 2011.
- Watch or join several competitions by registering in advance (details and costs online). New this year is the Kayak Polo Tournament, a cross between water polo, basketball and hockey. The Adventure Summit Triathlon includes a 15-minute run/walk, a 15-minute bike and a 15-minute swim. Participants’ scores will be based on distance “traveled” during the combined 45 minutes. People come from throughout the Midwest to participate in the popular Bouldering Competition, participants in the Frosty Cheeks 5K will run a course through WSU’s campus and those in Canoe Battleship will compete in teams to sink the opposition’s canoes while bailing out their own.
- Try various activities, such as kayaking, climbing, slacklining and yoga.
- At the expo, mingle with local, regional and national outdoor-related exhibitors, along with a variety of outdoor clubs, specialty retail shops, outfitters, resorts and more organizations that will help visitors plan for and reach their outdoor adventure goals. Enjoy live music, food and drink.
- This year’s TAS includes special opportunities for college students only, including discounted campus housing at Wright State and free pizza and pool parties on Friday night.

*Complete event details are at [theadventuresummit.com](http://theadventuresummit.com).*

*Reach DCP freelance writer Kristen Wicker at [KristenWicker@DaytonCityPaper.com](mailto:KristenWicker@DaytonCityPaper.com).*

**Article Link:** <http://www.daytoncitypaper.com/free-adventure/>