



by Ralph Lee Scott

GORP

GORP (Great Outdoor Recreation Pages) founded by Diane and Bill Greer in 1995, has more than 100,000 web pages of information on outdoor recreation and adventure travel. In addition to gear and stuff, GORP maintains several discussion groups among the outdoor and adventure community. This is an example of a topic-specific portal that fits in with the theme of this issue of *North Carolina Libraries*.

GORP <<http://www.gorp.com>> is divided into seven hyperlinks or main links: Home, Destinations, Activities, Community, Travel, Gear, and Books and Maps. Home has links to the other folders as well as a last-minute travel guide (called Procrastinator's Travel Guide) and links to selected activities/travel areas. The Destinations folder has links to: US Cities, Around the Globe, City Weekends, Parks, Book a Trip, Best Adventures, and Discussion Boards. The Activities link is broken down into interest groups: hiking, biking, paddling, fishing, birding, climbing, fitness, multi-sport, horseback riding, water sports, caving, driving RVs [sic!], ecology, health, skiing, snow sports, snorkeling, scuba, and wildlife viewing. Each "activity" has an "expert" whom you can read about and contact for advice. The advice questions are archived for reference purposes. A typical question might be the one I found in the Birding expert archives: "Could a Cardinal have a black beak as well as a yellow?" Sam the Bird Man then launches into a discourse on bird genetics and gives the opinion that some cardinals may have been feeding on some dark-colored fruit. There are also tabs on the Activities page for clubs, events, trail finder, book a trip, experts, and trail gear.

The Community tabs gives some of the prior links as well as new ones: GORP experts, discussion boards, join GORP, family, pets, humor, food, readers' top ten (places to visit), and tips for traveling with "your better half" on the trail. Pets (which I could not resist) got me stories like Dog Friendly Denver, First Aid for Dogs, Dogs in Spurs, Historic Hydrants in Washington, DC (I kid you not!), and traveling about "doggie style." No links to articles on cats, but then cats (or at least mine) don't travel. The travel tab takes one to GORPtravel.com, where you can select an appropriate travel destination or read about specials. Gear features links to actual product offerings along with discussions such as "Canister vs. White Gas," "Stay-dry Strategy," "Booted Bliss," and "Goosebump-free Sleep." The Gear tab is also divided into Ask Annie, Buy Gear, Packing Lists (what to pack), Gear Guides, and Gear Finder. The "Books and Maps" Folder contains links to book lists and special book offerings. The only map link was to "Map Adventures" in Stowe, Vt., which sells "quality topographic maps to the outdoor recreation enthusiast." Other links on this folder are to: trips, gear, books, "travel supplies," and photos. GORP also allows to you customize your computer with "My GORP," screensavers, e-cards, and customized newsletters.

The downside to GORP is that it appears to be a sort of mining site that tracks your interests for future use. Also, annoying ads pop up from time to time, one of which crashed my browser. Still, GORP can provide you and your patrons with some interesting links to the travel outdoors.

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