

## TURNER KATY TRAIL SHELTER

While touring the trail near Tebbetts in late October 2007, I spent a night at this two-story facility. It had turned dark on arrival. I found the key and opened the front door. The interior looked like a morgue. But the red EXIT signs gave enough light to locate the porch-light switch to the right and the main light switches on the back and left walls. No one was there, nor came later that chilly night.



I located the furnace next to the shower room, and turned it on both at the thermostat and a toggle switch on the left side of the furnace. The pilot was already lit. A 65°F setting took away the chill. After unfolding my blanket on a comfortable first-floor plastic-covered foam mattress, I looked around. Impressive. The previous guests had left it clean and orderly. The pantry contained opened packages of useable coffee grounds. The fridge held partial but fresh packages of hotdogs, buns, and wrapped cheese slices. The sign-in/comment logs showed it has served many hikers and bicyclers, well. Several church, scouting, and youth groups have also used it. Yes, this shelter is an asset to the trail. Directions for using it are well posted inside together with addressed envelopes for payment. Cost: \$5/each for individuals or drop-bys; \$20 for groups up to 40 plus \$1 for each person in the group. It's closed from December 1<sup>st</sup> to March 1<sup>st</sup>.

### Accommodations.

- Outside bike rack, covered front porch, and bright streetlight.
- Utilities: electricity, furnace, window air conditioners, hot water, fans, clock.
- Nineteen double bunks with firm foam mattresses; 11 downstairs, 8 upstairs with extra floor space (see the photos below).
- Large wardrobe lockers: against the walls between the bunks.
- Restroom: two enclosed flush toilets, dual hand sinks.
- Shower room: two stall-showers, separate from the restroom.
- Kitchen/dining: pantry holding paper and plastic wares, and some snack food; electric coffee maker; refrigerator/freezer with ice-cube trays; microwave; single hot plate; large wooden picnic table (more outside). Note: large vehicle-supported groups will cook outside by using their own gear and camp stoves.
- Bike room with tools: accessible both from the inside and outside. Bicycles can be brought inside.
- Entertainment: two parlor games; ping pong table (upstairs); several magazines, pamphlets, and brochures.
- Other: small store across the street when open and convenience store  $\frac{1}{3}$ -mile west on Route-94: cold/hot snacks and sundries.

The guests themselves and other volunteers do the cleaning and upkeep. They leave things behind for others to use, like, soap bars and a towel or two, and occasional snack food. Basically, the guests must furnish their own bedding, toiletries, towels, food, and chastity/self-protection devices (e.g., pepper spray, although not necessary among most guests). Drop-bys are limited to a one-night stay. Large private groups, who have reserved it beforehand, want to keep it for themselves while they're there. That's especially true if it's a youth group, although bad weather could be a factor for sharing it then. Otherwise, it's first-come first-served if no one has signed for it.

The shelter's large size promotes sharing by individuals and smaller groups. The guests, who often are strangers to one another, practice common bicycling and hostel courtesies, like, exchanging basic information, looking out for one another while sharing the place as needed, and keeping quiet. Most nighttime guests are tired, and want to rest before the next day's venture. The two floors plus an additional small room upstairs offer limited partitioning, as do the separated restroom and showers. Also, the front door can be double locked from the inside with a chain guard.

The shelter also welcomes tax-deductible donations and volunteerism. In addition to cash, it might need spot checks on the air conditioners, furnace, refrigerator, light bulbs, and other kinds of repairs. It might also use opaque shower curtains, old blankets or sleeping bags, shelves for small appliances, more straight chairs, latches on certain inside doors, bookshelf, radio/TV (secured), space heater, deep utility sink, and clothes dryer. The bike room or showers/water-heater room has space for a utility sink and small dryer. These two items could help guests coming in from stormy or wet weather.

Another benefit that came with my stay there was a large friendly dog that slept on the front porch. The next morning, I gave him a warm cheese-wrapped hotdog for his standing guard that night.

The Conservation Foundation of Missouri Charitable Trust, 573-496-3986, funds the Turner Katy Trail Shelter

Sites that mention the shelter or trail.

1. Conservation Foundation of Missouri Charitable Trust, 212 S. Rock Creek Road, Jefferson City, MO 65101 573-496-3086 [www.confedmo.org/about/trust.html](http://www.confedmo.org/about/trust.html)
2. Conservation Federation of Missouri, "Turner Katy Trail Shelter," [www.confedmo.org/programs/Turner\\_Katy\\_Trail\\_Shelter.html](http://www.confedmo.org/programs/Turner_Katy_Trail_Shelter.html)
3. Katy Trail Missouri: Services, Events, Towns, & More, [www.bikekatytrail.com/index.asp](http://www.bikekatytrail.com/index.asp)
4. Missouri State Parks and Historical Sites, "Katy Trail State Park," [www.mostateparks.com/katytrail/index.htm](http://www.mostateparks.com/katytrail/index.htm)
5. Trails from Rails, Pathways to Adventure and Discovery, "Katy Trail State Parks," [www.trailsfromrails.com/katy\\_trail.htm](http://www.trailsfromrails.com/katy_trail.htm)



**First floor: 1. To the furnace, bike room, and showers. 2. To the hallway, restroom, and stairs.**



**Eating area: Pantry, coffee pot, fridge, and microwave (hotplate hidden behind table).**



**Hand sinks.**



**Shower stalls.**



**Bike room.**



**Second floor: Far door opens to the front deck.**