

BUCKEYE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Trailblazer

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Trailblazer

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Photograph by Sally Sugar.

Pat Hayes helping sweep during the BRRRRR
Oak Winter Hike

President's Message

The 2018 hiking season is almost upon us and with it, the need to assess how well the Buckeye Trail came through the winter. At our recent Muskingum Lakes Chapter meeting, many aspects of our 2018 planned activities were discussed including MoreFest 2018 (around 100 registrants as of this writing) and work on the BTA Barn as well as the mowing schedule. All of the discussion was interesting and productive.

With this group (and the fact that three of our chapter section supervisors were present), I'm never surprised when talk gets around to trail maintenance and close to half of our time spent together was about this topic. As the Muskingum Lakes Chapter's capabilities have grown, so have the needs for that increased capacity.

A large part of the off-road portion of the Buckeye Trail in the Muskingum Lakes Chapter region resides within the lands owned by the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District. As part of an ongoing forestry management process, they are removing significant stands of coniferous trees that were planted when the district was just getting started over 80 years ago. The plan is for these areas to be taken back over by the hardwood trees and thus restoring these forests to something more naturally occurring in Ohio.

The logging operations that are accomplishing this process have had some effect on the Buckeye Trail as well as our Beall Farmstead lease area. So far, very little of the clear-cutting has crossed the Buckeye Trail but the logging roads have crossed the trail in several places necessitating some trail repair and re-benching. The MWCD has been mindful of our concerns and been very forthcoming with us regarding these operations. One of the areas that were logged was right above our lease area. The logging road that was built there looks like it can be incorporated into a planned perimeter trail.

The MWCD is the same great outfit that donated the Beall Farmstead buildings (including the BTA Barn) to the Buckeye Trail Association and increased our leased acreage to around 16 acres that includes some great frontage on Tappan Lake. By gaining this lakefront in our lease area, we now have access to use Tappan Lake and the right to build slips for 5 watercrafts. Through a generous donation from a long time BTA member and a grant from the Harrison County Historical Society, a decent fund has been set aside to upgrade the recently acquired Beall Farmhouse. The Muskingum Lakes Chapter is looking at what upgrades are needed and we invite you to let us know what you think. The entire Beal Farmstead needs to be operated to benefit the whole Buckeye Trail Association.

In case you're beginning to suspect a volunteer call-to-action, I won't be disappointing you. All this maintenance and event work requires commitment on the part of volunteers. We're blessed to have a cadre of leaders in the Muskingum Lakes Chapter that have answered that call but we could use more help. That is also true about the Buckeye Trail throughout the rest of Ohio as well. Besides the outdoor work, there is a lot of work going on behind the scenes by our current staff and the volunteers that help them. I encourage you to reach out to our Volunteer Coordinator, Barry Unger (volunteer@buckeyetrail.org) and see how you might be able to help.

Another area that you might consider is helping in your local area with fundraising. Our Development Committee Chair, Andy Haag, is looking to foster fundraising events throughout the state and would like your help. Andy is working with Jack Shaner to develop a strong fund raising arm for the BTA and with Linda Paul on the Blue Blaze Society. You can contact Andy at ahaag@custerproducts.com.

The most important area of growth that we all need to consider helping with is in membership. With Ohio's population standing at 11.6 million people, there's no reason why the BTA shouldn't have 10,000 members. That alone would make the ongoing work of the Buckeye Trail Association a much easier prospect. From now on, this effort will see a renewed focus. If this interests you, please reach out to our Membership Coordinator, Sally Sugar (ssugar@buckeyetrail.org), or myself at president@buckeyetrail.org. Here's hoping that we hear from you. I also hope to see you on the Buckeye Trail.

On the Trail

Andrew Bashaw



Andrew Bashaw

Happy Year of the Trails Ohio! As I sit here to write, Spring is just beginning to swell from trees buds, and Ohio Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 15 is marching forward for Ohio's 132nd General Assembly to designate 2018 as "Ohio's Year of the Trails"! That sure sounds nice for our trail communities, but what difference will it make for the Buckeye Trail? The answer to that is partly up to us.

A lot has happened with the legislature, Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and our partners around the state over the past year thanks in part to the leadership of BTA Volunteers like your President Stephen Walker. Do you remember when Brian Housh of the Rails to Trails Conservancy invited Representative Rick Perales to announce the House of Representative's version celebration of the year of the trail at our Yellow Springs Buckeye Trail Town celebration during TrailFest 2017? That was part of the effort that grew from our work to foster the creation of the Ohio Legislative Trails Caucus (OLTC). The bipartisan, bicameral caucus is co-chaired by Senators Sean O'Brien and Steve Wilson and is the first of its kind in the country.

During the first OLTC meeting, Sen. O'Brien requested an updated trail inventory from Chief Michael Bailey of ODNR's Division of Parks and Watercraft. Chief Bailey not only accepted the request, but worked to create a new position in the Division to steward this re-focus on trail management, development and stewardship. Welcome, Tom Arbour, Ohio's new Land and Water Trails Administrator! Because of our leadership and regularly scheduled work with the other members of the Ohio Trails Partnership (Ohio Horseman's Council, Central Ohio Mt. Biking Organization, Rails to Trails Conservancy, and water trail supporters) that we helped to form in the 1990's ODNR Parks and Watercraft has committed to creating a new comprehensive statewide trails plan to replace the 2005 version, to guide our work together to build and maintain the best statewide trail network in the nation. All of that is hopeful news of work that may benefit Ohio's state trail for years to come and how we all work together.

In the near future, this year, what are going to do to take advantage of the increased opportunity for promotion and awareness of one of Ohio's greatest assets, our state trail system? We need your help! Each of our events from a small guided hike, to a Buckeye Trail Crew Work Party, to a signature event like Buckeye TrailFest will be considered "Year of Trails" events that need your presence for success and

for you to share the invitation with your friends and family. We're also borrowing a great idea to honor Ohio's Year of the Trails and the 50th anniversary of the National Trails System Act – the Buckeye Trail 50+5 Challenge, to encourage you to get out on the BT, share your progress and achievement, and even give back five volunteer hours to the BT!

There is so much to say about all of the good work of BTA volunteers coming to fruition this year, just thinking about it all makes me tired! All of the buildings at the Beall Farmstead, including the BTA Century Barn, are being donated to the BTA by the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District, along with an increase of our lease area at Tappan Lake to 16 acres this year! MoreFest has come out of nowhere as new and popular signature event at the Barn this year! The North Coast Inland Trail reroute of the BT will be finalized this year thanks to Firelands Rails to Trails this year! Miles of BT will be constructed at the Edge of Appalachia Nature Preserve thanks the Buckeye Trail Crew and our partners at The Nature Conservancy this year! We'll be completing major trail relocations in the Wayne National Forest near the BTA office this year! The BTA has contracted with a third party to improve and expand our Buckeye TrailShop experience freeing up staff time to focus on other important priorities this year! The BTA has invited Jack Shaner to help us raise funds for these and many other important trail projects and important behind the scenes work this year! And, as always, so much more.

It is shaping up to be a banner year for the Buckeye Trail Association, but we can't do it without you! Celebrating our achievements and our progress in this Year of the Trails is important to reach that audience in Ohio who has never heard of the Buckeye Trail. Take a moment to support the BTA this year by renewing your membership, donating to the BTA, attending our many events, sharing your joy in the BT with others, volunteering for a few hours, or last but not least... hiking on the BT and sharing your experience with us all.

Thank you! Hope to see you on the Trail this Spring at Buckeye TrailFest!

Helping Bolster the Buckeye Trail

Jack Shaner



Jack Shaner

ago. But it seems like yesterday morning when my younger brother and I strapped on our heavy packs and started down a gently sloping, 7-mile desert trail in west Texas' Big Bend National Park.

The warmth of the sun on our arms and necks. The sweet smell of countless creosote bushes. The piercing sound of a spiraling hawk. And the vast stretch of sand and rocks and dark red mesas. We were far, far away from the wintry Ohio we'd left a few days ago.

Late that afternoon, we spotted a small thicket of cottonwood trees, right where our map indicated them. This welcome sight and the tiny trickle of stream it belied came just in time to refill our thirsty canteens.

With an assuring forecast of continued clear, dry weather, we pitched our tents in the inviting, soft sand of a dry desert wash. Our energy spent from the day's trek, we wolfed down some canned food and fruit, then leaned back to watch a glorious sunset streaked with fiery red and orange.

Nodding off, my brother gave in to the comforts of his tent. But I impulsively unfurled my sleeping bag on the soft sand, determined to keep soaking in the spectacular silent solitude. The last thing I recall before falling fast asleep was a cool but gentle breeze, softly coaxing me to close my eyes to a dark, star-studded sky that stretched from horizon to horizon in the deep dark desert night.

You have your own unforgettable outdoor memories, including, no doubt, time spent exploring our beloved Buckeye Trail. How would I know that you may wonder? Because I have spent the past couple of months getting up to speed on the history and plans of the BT and BTA-- reading reports, talking with staffers and board members and long-time supporters and, yes, hiking (parts of) the BT.

You see, I am beginning a new adventure -- an adventure I hope you will support. After three decades of public service, first as a legislative staffer in the Ohio Senate then as chief lobbyist

Remember your first hiking trip? If you're like me, you probably cannot. Not because the sights and sounds and sensations of that first trek have faded from your mind. No way. Those timeless memories will never die. It's just that your brain has blended them with those of so many succeeding hikes. In other words, it's been many years and many satisfying miles ago.

I do recall my first backpack trip. It was 21 years

for the public-interest Ohio Environmental Council, I want to keep giving to this beautiful state. How? By helping empower the small but mighty champions of just causes, like the Buckeye Trail Association.

The empowerment that I am teaming with the BTA to help build up is strengthened fundraising and membership growth -- an essential "nutrient" to help fuel its ceaseless care of the BT.

Ohio cannot boast mountains or desert, or oceans or rainforests. No, it can only lay claim to the breathtaking foothills of the Appalachians and undulating dunes and high river bluffs along its two watery "coasts." It counts one of the world's Great Lakes and great, fabled rivers, along with miles of smaller rivers and many ancient bogs and kettle lakes...along with some of the earth's most biologically rich hardwood forests and pockets of tallgrass prairies.

And one of the world's most important effigy mounds and millions of acres of beautiful, verdant farmland...scenic, small towns and bustling, big cities. Old canal locks, original rail corridors and cutting-edge, Fortune-500 centers of commerce and innovation.

All of this and more can be glimpsed from the BT, a priceless, yet free-and-open-to-the-public resource that is no more than an hour-and-a-half drive from each of Ohio's 11 million citizens.

And yet, the BT comprises a paradox: Though it is tread upon each year by millions of visitors, the BT remains unknown to most Ohioans, recognized mostly to only the Buckeye State's most informed outdoor lovers.

Like you, I am so in awe of the incredible foresight and incalculable volunteer effort that has built and maintained the 1,444-mile BT, America's longest continuous loop trail. And also like you, I want the mighty BT to forever be maintained and improved, protected and promoted.

To that end, I have a pair of asks of you -- the same asks I am making of every supporter of the BTA. First, please share your thoughts on the BT's most important needs -- current and future -- and how they can best be addressed. And second, please share the names of three friends or business or civic leaders that you think may want to help support the BTA.

Your thoughts and suggestions will help inform my efforts. Together, we can help the BTA to be an even stronger, more sustainable caretaker of and champion for the BT. So, please, accept my challenge! Put down this newsletter and call, text or email me right now at (614) 309-1169 or jshaner@buckeyetrail.org. I want to hear from you. And one day, I hope to meet you -- somewhere along the Buckeye Trail.

Editor's note: The BTA has engaged Jack Shaner to help it accomplish its mission to care for the BT and improve the hiking experience along it by raising funds and helping us build long-term, sustained support and revenue. Please welcome Jack and lend him your ideas and suggestions!

Updates Within the Loveland Section

Darryl R. Smith—Section Supervisor

From time to time I hope to submit articles regarding updates within the Loveland Section of the Buckeye Trail. These updates should allow the hiker to keep up to date with new routes, maintenance, and general information before setting out for a hike or backpacking trip. I will also include places of interest that a hiker may or may not know about, such as restrooms, water sources, and my favorite places to stop for a bite and a beer. The Loveland Section has a different vibe to it as you walk by interesting homes, partake of some greater Cincinnati iconic food joints, and enjoy a great amount of history along the way. Let's get started!

Reroutes

The first item to note is a reroute that occurred over two years ago, but seemingly hasn't made it to the Loveland Section alerts page. This reroute is mentioned in the Hewitt's recent book about the Buckeye Trail (the blazes are correct, the current Loveland map is not), and while this reroute was submitted to the BTA some time ago it hasn't been updated at the time of this writing. This reroute of the trail occurs .7 miles north of the Southern Terminus at the intersection of East McMillan Street and Victory Parkway. Instead of crossing McMillan and staying on Victory (the old route), now the trail turns right (east) and proceeds .25 miles along McMillan, then heads left onto Woodburn Avenue for .4 miles, before rejoining the old route at the intersection of Woodburn and Madison Avenue (right turn onto Madison). There are a few reasons for the reroute - it moves the trail from an area where hikers in the past have been harassed; it offers a nice walk in front of Saint Ursula Academy, and the trail now takes one through a revitalized Desales Corner

with shops and restaurants (and passes directly in front of Woodburn Brewery). Also, moving northbound along Woodburn provides an excellent view of the beautiful St. Francis de Sales Church.

Future Reroute I – The trail will be moved in Hyde Park (maybe by the time you read this). This new route will take the trail from Erie and up past the Cincinnati Observatory, one of the oldest in the United States, which is open on occasion for tours and might be of interest to hikers. Not only that, there is a seasonal drinking fountain located on the Observatory grounds. From the Observatory, the trail will move to and through Ault Park, then join a bike path that follows along Red Bank Road, and then will rejoin the current trail near the west end of the Murray Avenue Trail. Moving the trail through Ault Park gives the hiker relief from the noisy car traffic along Madison Avenue and gets the hiker into a wooded setting for a bit. The new route will be 2.4 miles, while the current route is 1.75 miles.

Future Reroute II – Once in Mariemont at the east end of the Murray Avenue Trail, the BT will proceed along Murray Road for a short bit (as it currently does), before taking a right turn onto Beech Street. Taking Beech Street for .25 miles, the hiker will then take a left onto tree-lined Wooster Pike while approaching the heart of Mariemont. This new route will allow the hiker to not only enjoy the shade on Wooster, but it will also provide many places to stop and enjoy several local restaurants. Also, by moving away from Plainfield Road, one has access to sidewalks nearly the entire way and avoids the confusing intersection of Plainfield and Madisonville Roads. This new route will rejoin the old route at current Point 7 on the Loveland Section map.



Morrow Old Rail Bridge

Darryl R. Smith



Morrow Rail Depot

Darryl R. Smith

Blazes

Blazes are updated from the Southern Terminus through the central portion of the Hyde Park neighborhood (about 4.25 miles), but as some of the blazes were originally painted on metal posts, at times those blazes will fade to yellow. Even with a base coat of Rustoleum and then a coat of Sweeping Blue, due to rust, the blazes change color rather quickly, so keep that in mind if you see yellowish blazes. There are plenty of Sweeping Blue markers in between to keep you on the correct path.

The Murray Avenue Trail also has new blazes along its route (one mile). This area has been in dire need of new blazing for some time, so now both ends should be easier to find for the BT hiker.

There are also now eighteen miles of new blazes along the Little Miami Scenic Trail from South Lebanon to the Loveland/Caesar Creek interchange. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources will not allow the BTA to paint blazes on trees along the LMST, so you will find these blazes along road crossings only, mostly on ODNR signs. The Loveland/Caesar Creek border should be much easier

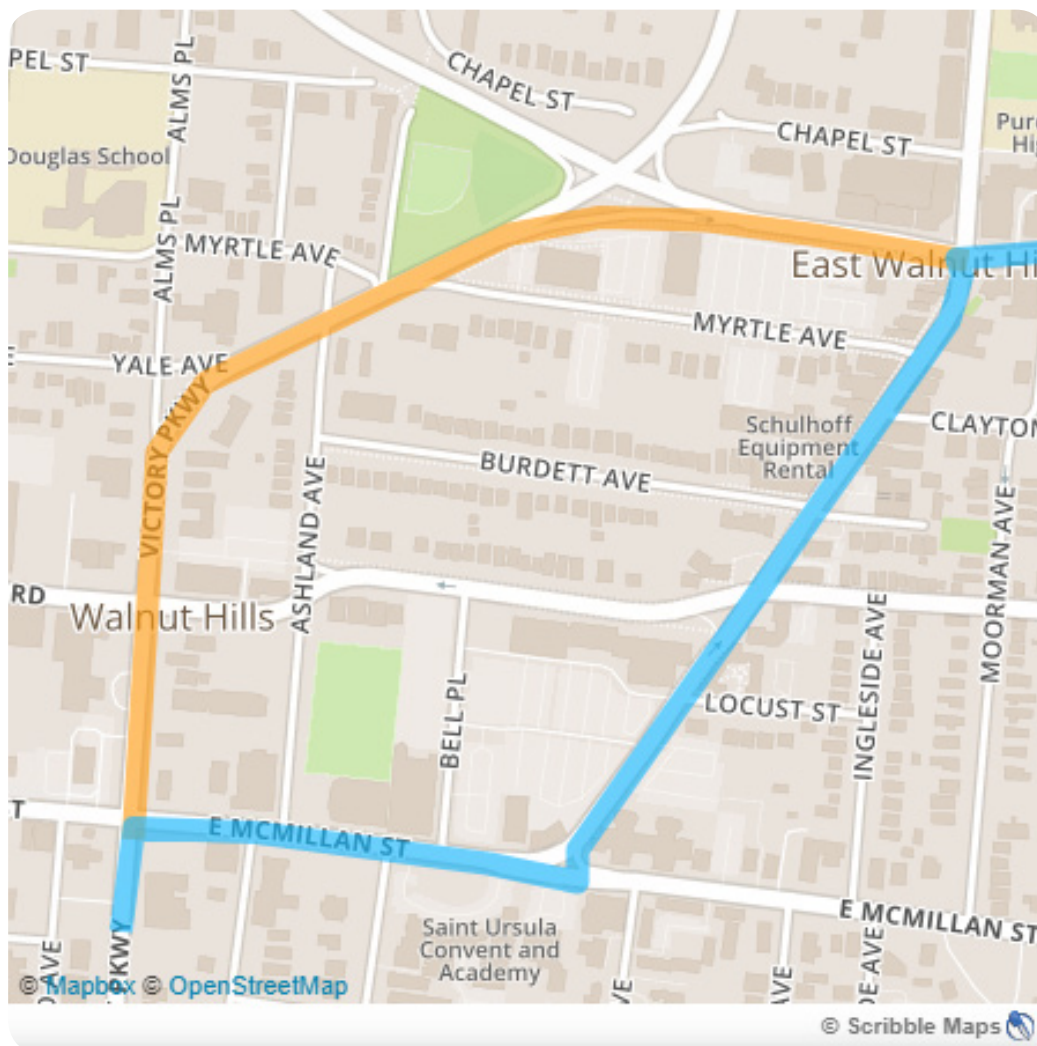
to navigate with the addition of new blazes on trees (sorry, ODNR), on the bridge leading out to Oregonia Road, and on the blacktop.

Other Items of Note

Miranda's, an iconic ice cream stop for bikers and hikers in Morrow, has closed. Morrow offers limited businesses for the hiker but does have a picnic shelter, restrooms, and a drinking fountain.

Section Adopters

While the Loveland Section is nearly all sidewalk and bike trail, with the reroutes mention above the section will be over forty-seven miles in length, and blazes should be painted once every year or two. To that end, I am looking for a handful of trail adopters to help me keep the blazes looking great. If you fanatical about the BT and love painting the best blazes, you are the right person for the job. I hope that some of you who live in or near the Loveland Section will contact me (loveland@buckeyetrail.org) and volunteer!



Map of the Loveland Section Reroute

Campsite & Shelter Development Updates

Richard Lutz

Welcome to a new year of campsite updates along the trail! Once again we have three more campsite updates. This includes one new campground that has opened along the trail and two new campsites. None of them would be possible without our partners around the state of Ohio and generous donors. So here are the updates:

Towpath Trail Campground Canoe & Bike Rental

A new campground has opened along the Towpath Trail in Stark County. This new campsite is just south of the former campsite in Navarre on Riverland Avenue SE and helps fill the gap left when the former campsite closed. The campground is located in the Massillon Section.

Western Local School District

Thanks to Nick Hamilton and the Western Local School District, a new campsite has been established off of Shoemaker Road on the back part of the school property for through hikers. This free campsite is located in the Sinking Spring Section.

BTA Schmidt Campsite

At the very end of the year, we received a donation of a quarter acre piece of property in Ross County by Kathy Schmidt. This site is still under development but will be open soon. The new campsite is in the Scioto Trail Section. More details on this donation can be found in a separate article in this issue of the "Trailblazer".

All three sites will show up as a future map update and will be on the respective section map when it is updated by the map committee.

Once again, special thanks go out to Towpath Trail Campground & Bike Rental, Western Local School District, and Kathy Schmidt. These three sites, added to the existing camping locations, will make backpacking the Buckeye Trail more convenient.

The BTA's Trail Preservation Fund helps the BTA develop campsites, protect the trail through easements and property purchase,

build trail and keep it open for everyone. If you would like to contribute towards the fund, visit our website at buckeyetrail.org/preservation.php and click on the "donate" button. If you would like to help in the campsite development process (or trail development as well), please feel free to contact the Trail Preservation Committee at preservation@buckeyetrail.org. Stay tuned, as we continue to develop additional campsites along the trail!



New Campsite In Ross County

Richard Lutz



Buckeye Trail Association recently acquired a 0.28 acre of land in Ross County from the Donald P. Schmidt family of Xenia, Ohio. This property is next to an unimproved road along which the trail passes and can be developed into a campsite for Buckeye Trail hikers. The history of the property is interesting. Kathy Schmidt Reuter, daughter of Donald P. Schmidt (b. 1919-d. 1988) relates that her father's grandparents, bought some farm property in Ross County near Waverly to retire on in the 1920's. Don and his siblings would visit during summers and have a grand time, hiking, fishing and hunting on the farm and the surrounding lands along with a neighboring friend, Clyde. When Don had children, he took them to his grandparents' farm to experience the fun he had growing up. By now, in the 1960's, the farm was abandoned with the buildings falling down but Don and his kids still would camp there. Finally, the farm property

was passed down through the Schmidt family ending up with a distant cousin who ultimately sold the land in the late 1970's. Don's childhood friend from the neighboring farm, Clyde, felt badly for Don and his family who enjoyed the land so much. He gave Don a small parcel of land across the lane from the original farm so that Don and his family could camp there. After Don died his wife, Lois, held onto the property until she passed away in 2017. The family felt it fitting that the land be donated to Buckeye Trail Association.

If you are interested in donating or assisting the Trail Preservation Committee in creating a permanent corridor for the Buckeye Trail and campsites along the Buckeye Trail around the state of Ohio, please contact us at 740-394-2008 or via e-mail at preservation@buckeyetrail.org.



Building Relationships With the Trail Running Community in Northeast Ohio

Randall Roberts

“Trail runners are awesome. They’re like hikers that go really fast,” is a line I used in my opening remarks for a Buckeye Trail Presentation I gave at the Tents and Trails Midwest Trail Running Festival, a two day event organized by Western Reserve Racing (WRR) at Camp Manatoc in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park in Peninsula, Ohio. In 2016, the BTA was offered the opportunity to have a booth at the “Vendor Village” during the festival. Volunteers from the Crooked River Chapter manned the booth and spent the time answering questions about the Buckeye Trail, mostly from family members and friends of runners while they awaited their runners return to the finish line. In 2017, the BTA was asked if we would use our 501(c)(3) status to sell beer at their Tents and Trails event with all proceeds going to the BTA. We did, and we raised over \$500. Additionally, they donated \$100 for me to talk about the Buckeye Trail for a half hour. I’m sure some people would probably give me money to stop talking about the Buckeye Trail! Most runners in our area are very familiar with “The Buckeye” as they often shorten the name, but not all were aware that if they kept going they would end up back where they started. So they were very interested in learning more about the Buckeye Trail. Western Reserve Racing has expanded their invitation in 2018 for the BTA to sell beer at two of their events - the Fools 50k/25K at Camp Manatoc on March 31 and again at the Tents and Trails Festival September 1st.

Other races organized by the WRR which utilize part of the Buckeye Trail include their Winter Buckeye Trail Run - 50K/Marathon/Half Marathon, The Bobcat Marathon at Burr Oak State Park, the Burning River 50mile/100mile endurance run and relay, and the timing for the Buckeye Trail 50K – an event hosted by Vertical Runner, a running



Several volunteers use hand saws for smaller trees.

Randall Roberts



Randall Roberts

Pat Hayes cuts through a downed tree on the Buckeye Trail.

specialty store who gives a 10% discount on footwear to Buckeye Trail Association members. This year, Vertical Runner has added an opportunity for registrants to make a cash donation to the Buckeye Trail Association as part of the registration for the BT50K. Additionally, in order to participate and run in the BT50K, one must have completed 3 hours of volunteer service at the 2017 BT50K or in support of another event, local park, and/or trail system. So some runners are looking for volunteer hours on the Buckeye Trail as their way of giving back.

Similarly, in 2016 the BTA was asked if we would be interested in having a booth at the Burning River Film Festival in Akron. I was able to get our display in the hands of, then new member, Julie Kirby who represented us at the film festival. I literally had to track her down on the trail to find her. She was doing a marathon hike organized by one of our members, Greg Madachik. Julie completed her first trail marathon last year at our own Annual Buckeye Trail Run for Blue Blazes.

The Burning River Film Festival is a non-profit organization with proceeds benefiting the trails and parks serving Northeast Ohio. Taken from their website:

“The Burning River Film Festival is a celebration of community, trail running, and nature. The inspiring stories of athletes testing their limits in long-distance endurance races, the overwhelming supportive spirit of the trail running community, and the beautiful scenery and places all captured by film makers in short and feature-length films will be on showcase.”

These films really do capture what motivates these

runners to push their limits and the support they receive. Their stories are truly inspiring. In 2017, not only did we have the Buckeye Trail display on hand, the Film Festival started off with a short video created by Robert Lowendick in which he interviewed our trail crew working on the trail at Burr Oak State Park. It was thrilling to see this video presented on the big screen at the Akron Civic Theater to an audience of trail running enthusiasts. The video showcased the importance and dedication of our trail volunteers. The Burning River Film Festival was founded by Jessica Croisant, who is amazing in her own right. She ran her first 5K in 2014, her first ultra-marathon in 2015, and by 2016 she was running her first 100-mile race.

Jessica is the inspiration for this article. She was looking for volunteer hours to qualify her to participate in the Orcas Island 100 in the state of Washington in February. All 100-mile participants in that race are required to volunteer on trails (any trails, anywhere) for at least eight (8) hours between January 1st, 2017 - February 1st, 2018. Jessica wanted to volunteer on the Buckeye Trail that she loves to run on regularly. In her own words:

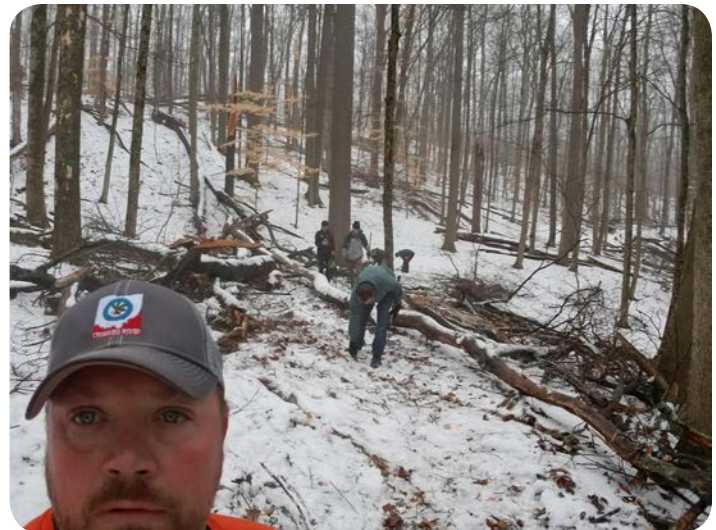
"Three or four years ago I started trail running. I went to the Trails in Motion Film Festival where I saw a documentary film about a 100-mile race on Orcas Island. The thought of doing something so different and near impossible in such a beautiful place inspired me in ways I could have never predicted. It inspired me to run. And run not just anywhere but the most beautiful and rustic northeast Ohio has. The Buckle Trail. It inspired me to have my own film festival where I could show films to inspire others. Flash forward to now. I am running the Orcas Island 100 this weekend. I did my trail work on the Buckeye. I trained on the Buckeye. I fell in love with the Buckeye. I ran the piano keys in the moonlight in sub-zero temperatures. I did lunges in mud in the bog of despair. I dodged the roots of pine lane. The Buckeye built me."

The section of trail that WRR wanted to run on for their



Randall Roberts

Several volunteers use hand tools to clear downed trees on the trail, allowing for more ground to be covered.



James Sunyakk

Sunny always has time for a selfie. No surprise there!

Winter 50K was plagued with several downed trees forcing them to relocate their race to trails other than the Buckeye Trail. Although we could not guarantee that their primary choice of trail would be cleared in time for the race, we were able to clear the trail they were going to race on and a good portion of trail within the Cleveland Metroparks. Akron Section Supervisor, Jim "Sunny" Sunyak coordinated the efforts using information collected by Jessica and his own scouting. He formulated a plan and worked with Cleveland Metroparks' trail specialist, Ralph Protano who also assisted in the clearing. Sixteen volunteers logged 77 hours clearing 43 trees from the trail. It was a team effort that couldn't have happened without Bill Jindra, Pat Hayes, and Ralph Protano on the chainsaws, but everyone pitched in. The participation from the trail runners was invaluable and inspiring. The very people who Jessica saw in the trail running movie years ago became her dear friends and she invited them to the work party. They came out and worked along side her that day cutting trees down on the BT. "They'll be towing the line with me at Orcas this Friday, and it means everything to me," Jessica said.

Some of them are now interested in becoming adopters and may adopt a larger section as a group. The day successfully demonstrated the power of partnerships with a common goal, one that will surely be repeated.

To learn more about Western Reserve Racing go to www.westernreserveracing.com. For more information about the BT50K please visit: <https://verticalrunner.com/2018-buckeye-trail-50k/> For more about the Burning River Film festival, go to <http://burningriverfilmfest.com/> or get inspired by Jessica Croisant's podcasts about racing, nutrition, and other running related subjects, at <http://www.sugarstride.com/>

2018 Schedule of Hikes & Events

Always check www.buckeyetrail.org/events.html for last-minute updates

MARCH

March 11, 2018

Mentor Marsh/Buckeye Trail Work Day/Hike

Description: Vegetation management; hopefully building a privy. We will leave for work at 8:30am and quit at 3:30pm.

Description: - 2:00 PM. Two miles of Buckeye Trail thru Mentor Marsh spring cleanup. Wear sturdy footwear and bring gloves and a snack.

Location: Meet at Mentor Marsh Nature Center, 5185 Corduroy Road, Mentor OH

Contact and RSVP to: rdonaldson@cmjh.org. 440-247-0777 or bedford@buckeyetrail.org. 440-382-6277

March 15, 2018

"Grandma" Gatewood Program

Description: The 50-minute film about Grandma Gatewood followed by a Q&A with Bette Lou Higgins of Eden Valley Enterprises. This program is free.

Location: Oberlin Heritage Center, 600 Kendal Drive, Oberlin, Ohio

March 17-18, 2018

BT Circuit Hike - New Straitsville Section

Contact: Jim Gilkey at 614-879-9912 ahead of time or at 740-277-8749 on the weekend of the hike.

March 18, 2018

Mentor Marsh/Buckeye Trail work day/hike

Description: Two miles of Buckeye Trail thru Mentor Marsh spring cleanup. Wear sturdy footwear and bring gloves and a snack.

Location: 2:00 PM at Mentor Marsh Nature Center, 5185 Corduroy Road, Mentor OH.

Contact & RSVP to: rdonaldson@cmjh.org, 440-247-0777, or bedford@buckeyetrail.org, 440-382-6277

March 26-31, 2018

Shawnee Spring Clean-up at Shawnee State Park

Description: Show your appreciation for the big woods by volunteering to clean up waterways, trails, roadsides and more during this week-long clean-up. Register your group at the Park Office at 740-858-6652. Bags, buckets and litter tongs available for pick up at the park during orientation and sign in.

Note: The Saturday picnic for all volunteers will be on Sat. March 31 at noon at the Roosevelt Shelter House.

Contact: Jenny Richards, Naturalist, 740-858-6652

March 27, 2018

Thru-Hiking the Buckeye Trail

Description: On an 88-day thru-hike of Ohio's Buckeye Trail, Andy "Captain Blue" Niekamp made the most amazing long-distance journey of his life. As he walked his home state through wilderness, farmland, small towns, big cities, rural and urban areas, he discovered Ohio in a way that can be only experienced on

foot. Captain Blue's stories about the people and places, past and present will change the way you see Ohio. His beautiful photos and experiences will surely inspire you to hike the Buckeye Trail. Andy Niekamp's book titled "*Captain Blue on the Blue Blazes - The First Solo Thru-Hike of Ohio's 1,444 Mile Buckeye Trail*" will be available for purchase.

Location 7:00PM at Salem Township Public Library - Morrow Library, 535 West Pike St. Morrow, Ohio 45152

Contact: <http://www.salem-township.lib.oh.us/>

APRIL

April 5, 2018

Ohio Chapter Membership Drive

Location: 6:00-8:30PM, Coaches Gahanna Food & Spirits, 230 Granville Street, Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Contact: Bob Litt at bob.litt.2016@gmail.com

April 7-8, 2018

BT Circuit Hike - Bedford Section

Contact: Jim Gilkey at 614-879-9912 ahead of time or at 740-277-8749 the weekend of the hike.

April 8, 2018

April Showers Hike - St. Marys Section

Register: 1-3PM at Noble Township Hall

Contact: Heritage Trails Park District at <http://buckeyetrail.org/htparks>

April 14-15, 2018

Old Mans Cave Section Work Weekend at Pretty Run

Description: New trail construction, re-benching of some existing trail tread, heavy trail maintenance, and vegetation management. We will leave for work at 8:30am and quit at 3:30pm.

Camping: Camping will be at Pretty Run property. Camping GPS coordinates 39.34987, -82.62431

Meals: Bring your own food and water.

April 17, 2018

Thru-Hiking the Buckeye Trail: Things That Will Change the Way You See Ohio

Description: On an 88-day thru-hike of Ohio's Buckeye Trail, Andy "Captain Blue" Niekamp made the most amazing long-distance journey of his life. As he walked his home state through wilderness, farmland, small towns, big cities, rural and urban areas, he discovered Ohio in a way that can be only experienced on foot. Captain Blue's stories about the people and places, past and present will change the way you see Ohio. His beautiful photos and experiences will surely inspire you to hike the Buckeye Trail. Andy Niekamp's book titled "*Captain Blue on the Blue Blazes - The First Solo Thru-Hike of Ohio's 1,444 Mile Buckeye Trail*" will be available for purchase.

Location: Dayton Metro Library-Main Branch, Community Room 2A, 215 E. 3rd St.

Dayton, OH 45402

More information: www.daytonmetrolibrary.org.

April 20-22, 2018

2018 BTA MorelFest

Description: Come and join us for a weekend of hiking, music, food, camping, and of course... Morels!!

Location: BTA Barn near Deersville OH

Camping: Limited camping for a fee will be allowed at the BTA Barn.

Meals: Bring a dish to share for Saturday night's potluck supper. Sunday's pancake breakfast is free, but you must be a registered MorelFest attendee to attend. Bring your own food for all other meals.

Registration: Registration is now open. Visit the BTA Morel Fest page at <http://www.buckeyetrail.org/morel-fest.php> for full details.

Additional Information: Visit the BTA Morel Fest page or the Facebook page for more info. <https://www.facebook.com/events/139449016771861/>

NOTE Depending on weather conditions, this event may be postponed until that weekend of May 4-6.

Contact: Muskingum Lakes Chapter at Muskingumlakes@buckeyetrail.org

April 21-22, 2018

Scioto Trail Section Work Weekend

Description: Re-benching the trail tread and heavy vegetation management between Davis Rd. and Pike Lake Dam. (Points 32-36, Feb 2102 Scioto Trail Section map). We will leave for work at 8:30am and quit at 3:30pm.

Camping: Camping will be at Pike Lake State Park

Meals: Bring your own food and water

April 26-29, 2018

2018 Buckeye TrailFest at Camp Oat'yOkwa

Location: Camp Oat'yOkwa in Hocking County, OH

Contact: See the TrailFest web site for more details.

April 29, 2018

BTA Annual Membership Business Meeting

Location: 9:00AM at Buckeye TrailFest at Camp Oat'yOkwa

Contact: president@buckeyetrail.org

April 29, 2018

BTA Board Meeting

Location: 10:00AM at Buckeye TrailFest at Camp Oat'yOkwa

Contact: president@buckeyetrail.org

MAY

May 5-6, 2018

BT Circuit Hike - New Straitsville and Old Man's Cave Sections

Contact: Jim Gilkey at 614-879-9912 ahead of time or at 740-277-8749 the weekend of the hike.

May 5-9, 2018

Bowerston Section Work Week

Description: Vegetation management, clearing dead falls, and re-benching tread as needed on the north and south sides of Clendingen lake. (Points 18-21)

Camping: Camping will be at the BTA Barn at Tappan Lake

Meals: TBD

May 12, 2018

Morchella, Vino and the Buckeye Trail

Description: Hiking the Buckeye Trail, searching for Morel mushrooms, and wine! Well, we are putting all three together for this event! Come and meet new people who share a love for the outdoors, wine, and Morel mushrooms. Raven's Glenn Chef will be preparing three variations of Morel Mushrooms (Morchella) as appetizers, paired with award-winning wine. Come and join us for an afternoon of great food, amazing wine, and hear a presentation about the Buckeye Trail and our locally held Morelfest! Guest Speakers include Chuck and Beth Hewett who will talk about their thru hike of the BT and Julie Powell, chef and owner of More Than Morel Mushrooms, LLC who will talk about Morel mushrooms.

Registration: Registration is required and limited to 60 attendees. Register at the following:

<http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=9ewty5eab∓oeidk=a07ef3lqea898c9c977>

Location: Raven's Glenn Winery, 56183 County Road 143, West Lafayette, Ohio 43845

Additional Information: <https://www.facebook.com/events/314786192342558/>

Contact: Brandon Bates at bbates1972@gmail.com

May 19-23, 2018

Stockport Section Work Week at AEP

Description: Re-benching the trail tread, Vegetation management, Paint blazes. We will leave for work at 8:00am and quit at 3:00pm

Camping: Camping will be at AEP's Hook Lake (Campground A) Camping GPS coordinates 39.72945, -81.70509.

Meals: This is a chuck wagon event. Meals will be provided free (donations accepted) for the first 20 volunteers to sign up with Jay Holwick at holwick@columbus.rr.com by May 16, 2018.

Please note: if you are arriving Friday, the Friday night meal is NOT included - please bring your own.

Portable hot showers will be available on this site.

JUNE

June 2-6, 2018

Akron Section Work Week at Cuyahoga Valley National Park

Akron Section Work Week at Cuyahoga Valley National Park

Description: Re-benching the trail tread as

needed, heavy trail maintenance, and drainage clearing.

Camping: TBD

Meals: This is a chuck wagon event. Meals will be provided free (donations accepted) for the first 20 volunteers to sign up with Jay Holwick at holwick@columbus.rr.com by May 30, 2018.

Please note: if you are arriving Friday, the Friday night meal is NOT included - please bring your own.

June 9-10, 2018

BT Circuit Hike - Bedford Section

Contact: Jim Gilkey at 614-879-9912 ahead of time or at 740-277-8749 the weekend of the hike.

June 21, 2018

Thru-Hiking the Buckeye Trail

Description: On an 88-day thru-hike of Ohio's Buckeye Trail, Andy "Captain Blue" Niekamp made the most amazing long-distance journey of his life. As he walked his home state through wilderness, farmland, small towns, big cities, rural and urban areas, he discovered Ohio in a way that can be only experienced on foot. Captain Blue's stories about the people and places, past and present will change the way you see Ohio. His beautiful photos and experiences will surely inspire you to hike the Buckeye Trail. Andy Niekamp's book titled "*Captain Blue on the Blue Blazes - The First Solo Thru-Hike of Ohio's 1,444 Mile Buckeye Trail*" will be available for purchase.

Location: 6:00PM at the Willard Memorial Library (a Huron County Community Library), 6 W Emerald St, Willard, OH 44890

Contact: <http://huroncolib.org/calendar/2018-06>

June 21-24, 2018

Emma Grandma Gatewood Solstice (E.G.G.S.) Hike

Description: The 9th Annual

JULY

July 14, 2018

Little Loop Challenge

Description: Let's hike the BTA's Little Loop again this year!

Contact: The Crooked River Chapter at crookedriver@buckeyetrail.org

July 15-15, 2018

BT Circuit Hike - Old Man's Cave Section

Contact: Jim Gilkey at 614-879-9912 ahead of time or at 740-277-8749 the weekend of the hike.

July 21-25, 2018

Road Fork/Whipple Sections Work Week

Description: Trail maintenance of the Road Fork and Whipple Section's off road areas. This will include chain sawing of downed trees, mowing, weed whacking, pruning, and possible freshening of blazes for a little over 30 miles in the heat of July. We will need all the help we can get. We will leave for work at 8:00am and quit at

3:00pm.

Camping: Camping will be at the Little Muskingum Watershed Association building, located at SR26 and Thomas Ridge Rd (T 88) Hot showers and flush toilets are available in the building. Donations to the LMWA for use of the facilities are appreciated. Camping GPS coordinates 39.54184, -81.22484

Meals: This is a chuck wagon event. Meals will be provided free (donations accepted) for the first 20 volunteers to sign up with Jay Holwick at holwick@columbus.rr.com by July 17, 2018.

Please note: if you are arriving Friday, the Friday night meal is NOT included - please bring your own.

July 28-29, 2018

BTA Board Meeting

Description: Meetings start at 9:00AM each day, meals provided

Location: BTA Barn

Contact: president@buckeyetrail.org

AUGUST

August 4-8, 2018

Defiance Section Work Week at Independence Dam State Park and Toledo Metroparks at Providence or Farnsworth Parks

Description: Clearing vegetation from about 3 miles of trail from Independence Dam State Park until the trail crosses the canal on a bridge.

Camping: TBD

Meals: Bring your own food and water.

August 18-19, 2018

BT Circuit Hike - Bedford Section

Contact: Jim Gilkey at 614-879-9912 ahead of time or at 740-277-8749 the weekend of the hike

SEPTEMBER

September 8-9, 2018

BT Circuit Hike - Old Man's Cave Section

Contact: Jim Gilkey at 614-879-9912 ahead of time or at 740-277-8749 the weekend of the hike.

September 22-26, 2018

New Straitsville Section Work Week at Burr Oak State Park

Description: New Straitsville section trail maintenance week in preparation for the BTA's Run for Blue Blazes Trail Marathon on Oct 6th. We will leave for work at 8:30am and quit at 3:30pm.

Camping: We will be camping at the Burr Oak State Park Group campground near boat dock 3.

Meals: This is a chuck wagon event. Meals will be provided free (donations accepted) for the first 20 volunteers to sign up with Jay Holwick at holwick@columbus.rr.com by Sept. 18, 2018.

Please note: if you are arriving Friday, the Friday night meal is NOT included - please bring your own. **Continued on page 12**

2018 Schedule of Hikes & Events

Always check www.buckeyetrail.org/events for last-minute updates

OCTOBER

October 6, 2018

Run 4 Blue Blazes Marthon

Description: Run for Blue Blazes is organized by the Buckeye Trail Association (BTA) and supports the work of the Buckeye Trail. Participants can choose from four distances: Marathon (26.2 miles), Half Marathon (13.1 miles), 10K (6.2 miles) and 5K (3.1 miles).

Location: The race starts and ends in downtown Shawnee, OH.

Information: Visit the Run 4 Blue Blazes web page at <http://www.buckeyetrail.org/run4blue.php> for all the details. Registration is OPEN!

October 13-17, 2018

Road Fork Section Work Week

Description: We will be building new trail along the north side of Caldwell Lake as well as heavy trail maintenance, vegetation management and bridge, puncheon or boardwalk construction near point 22.

Camping: TBD

Meals: This is a chuck wagon event. Meals will be provided free (donations accepted) for the first 20 volunteers to sign up with Jay Holwick at holwick@columbus.rr.com by Oct. 10, 2018.

Please note: if you are arriving Friday, the Friday night meal is NOT included - please bring your own.

October 20-21, 2018

Old Mans Cave Section - Work Weekend at Pretty Run

Description: New trail construction, re-benching of some existing trail tread, heavy trail maintenance, and vegetation management. We will leave for work at 8:30am and quit at 3:30pm.

Camping: Camping will be at the Pretty Run property. Camping GPS coordinates 39.34987, -82.62431

Meals: Bring your own food and water.

October 27-31, 2018

West Union Section Work Week at Edge of Appalachia

Description: Continue building new trail in the beautiful 19,000 acre Richard and Lucile Durrell Edge of Appalachia Preserve. We will leave for work at 8:30am and quit at 3:30pm.

Camping: Near the maintenance building at 3223 Waggoner Riffle Rd. Camping GPS coordinates 38.74836, -83.46397

Meals: This is a chuck wagon event. Meals will be provided free (donations accepted) for the first 20 volunteers to sign up with Jay Holwick at holwick@columbus.rr.com by Oct. 24, 2018.

Please note: if you are arriving Friday, the Friday night meal is NOT included - please bring your own.

Note: The portable hot shower will be available on site.

NOVEMBER

November 3, 2018

BTA Board Meeting

Description: 10:00AM

Location: Shawnee, OH

Contact: president@buckeyetrail.org

Even more events
with BTA chapters on
Meetup

Crooked River Chapter

www.meetup.com/Crooked-River-Chapter-Buckeye-Trail-Association
This chapter focuses on the Akron, Bedford, Burton and Mogadore sections of the BT.

Central Ohio Chapter

www.meetup.com/BuckeyeTrailFriends
This chapter offers additional central Ohio events as well as activities for all of the BT. Central Ohio comprises Franklin and adjacent counties: Delaware, Licking, Fairfield, Pickaway, Madison and Union.

Little Cities of the Forest Chapter

www.meetup.com/BTALittleCitiesChapter
This chapter focuses on southeast Ohio and the Stockport, New Straitsville, and Old Man's Cave sections of the BT.

Miami Rivers Chapter

www.meetup.com/miamiriverchapter
This chapter focuses on the Cincinnati-Dayton area and the Williamsburgs, Loveland, Caesar Creek, and Troy sections of the BT.

Muskingum Lakes Chapter

www.meetup.com/muskingumlakeschapter
This chapter focuses on eastern Ohio and the Massilon, Bowerston, and Belle Valley sections of the BT.



Review: Captain Blue on the Blue Blazes

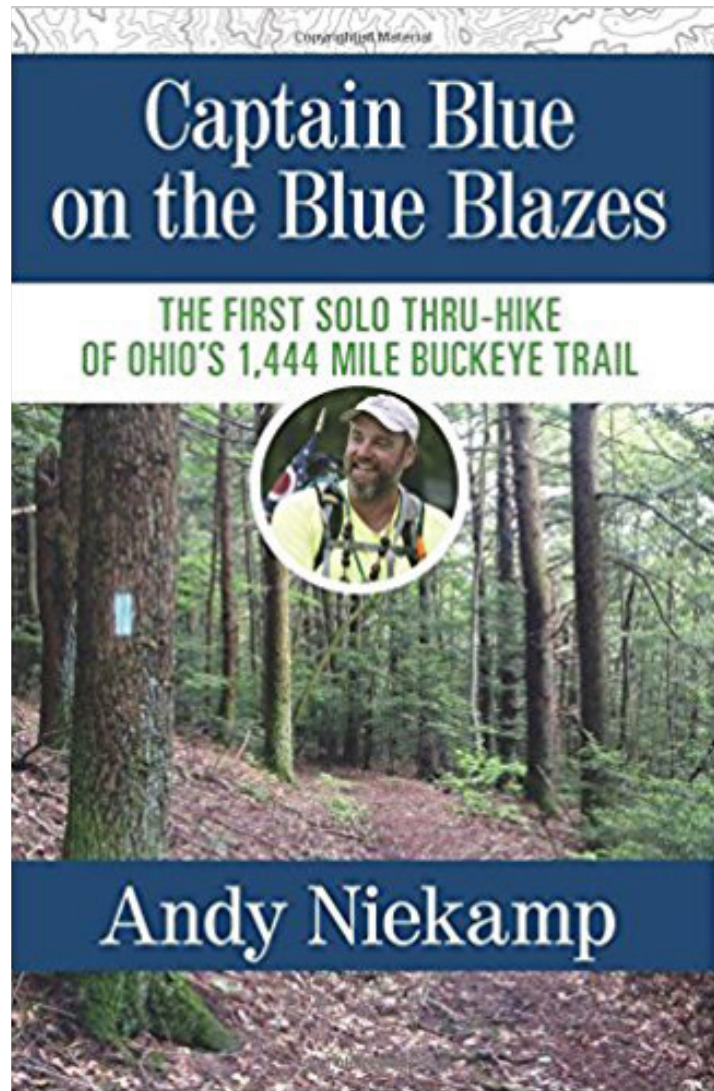
Patty Hillis Carro

Ohio's Buckeye Trail winds across 1,444 miles of dirt and bike paths, city streets, rural roads, forests and pastures – all ostensibly marked by painted “blue blazes” to guide the way. Unlike the Appalachian and Pacific Crest Trails on the east and west coasts, respectively, which meander vertically from end to end, the Buckeye Trail is a loop approximating the perimeter of Ohio. If you start in Dayton, for instance, you can plan a hike that finishes in Dayton. That is exactly what wilderness adventurer Andy Niekamp did over 88 challenging days in the spring of 2011. In so doing, he became the first to complete a solo thru-hike of the Buckeye Trail at its current length of 1,444 miles. What's more, “Captain Blue,” as he is known on the trail, chronicled his daily progress via a blog that eventually became a 196-page book: *Captain Blue on the Blue Blazes*. It is a marvelous account of one man's journey.

Neatly divided into segments noting the calendar date, day on the trail, location, and miles hiked, the book is filled with “insider” knowledge and details that even the novice hiker or armchair traveler will find fascinating. Niekamp's writing style is concise and straightforward. As he gains his “trail legs” with each successive mile, so too does he find a good pace for his story. In these pages, we meet a man who is dogged, determined, and dedicated to the unknown adventures awaiting him each day. Along with his grit, he has packed a fine sense of humor to help him cope with the unexpected, whether it be parts of the trail that have been deliberately obscured by landowners, boot-sucking miles of mud that impede progress, or strangers who mistake him for a down-on-his-luck, homeless vagrant.

As the miles begin to accumulate, Niekamp finds a new affection for his home state, despite conditions that would cause most sensible people to hang up their boots and call it quits. Icy rain and subfreezing temperatures alternate with heat and humidity in a perplexing variety of meteorological patterns. Native and transplanted Ohioans recognize the phenomenon simply as “Ohio in the spring.” Niekamp conquers the elements, at least most of the time, relying on his expertise gained over years of trekking. Helping him are family, friends, and “trail angels” who appear with water or protein bar or words of encouragement at the exact moments they are most needed. As Niekamp notes, hiking the Buckeye Trail is a more solitary experience than say, the Appalachian Trail (which he has now completed four times) because other hikers are rarely encountered. Except for those times when he gratefully welcomes a fellow hiker as company, Niekamp is alone in his quest, aware that many sections of the trail are isolated, or poorly marked, or in need of basic maintenance to allow progress to the day's destination.

Along the Buckeye Trail, the reader comes to understand what it means to be a solo hiker. He or she is treated to a view of Ohio that is refreshing in its simplicity. A hike, by its very nature, is a slowed-down effort to connect with the elements:



air, water, earth. Niekamp connects with those elements, and readers, by reflecting about what compels him to head outdoors on a regular basis, leaving behind the life of an information technology professional to embrace whatever might be over the next horizon.

Niekamp has accomplished two remarkable feats: thru-hiking the Buckeye Trail and writing an informative, entertaining book (complete with photographs) about his unique experiences and outlook. In the future, “Captain Blue” may find that he has inspired others to join him on the Buckeye Trail. No doubt, this founder/organizer of the hugely popular Dayton Hikers organization will welcome the company.

Patty Hillis Carro is a freelance writer who travels frequently, and now is inspired to put one foot in front of the other and...hike!

5+5 Challenge

2018 is the 50th Anniversary of the National Trails System Act, and Ohio is the first state to honor this moment by designating 2018 as Ohio's Year of the Trails with Senate Concurrent Resolution 15! To celebrate both the BTA we're challenging ourselves to hike 50 miles on the BT and/or give back 5 hours of volunteer service to the trail we love.

Enjoy the BT! Give Back! Complete the Form!... and we'll send you a patch for hiking, a patch for volunteering, or both patches and a certification of Completion for the 50+5 Challenge to commemorate your achievement!

Hike 50 Miles!

Looking for some opportunities to log some miles on the Buckeye Trail? We have all kinds of chances coming up this year! With over 1400 miles of trail, at least 5 signature events, and dozens of group hikes, your very own Buckeye Trail adventure is waiting!

Hike Into the 2018 Trailfest Celebration

This five day Hocking Hills adventure kicks off the start of our first ever combined annual Buckeye TrailFest & North Country Trail Association Celebration. The hike starts on Sunday, April 22 and will offer the ambitious hiker an opportunity to hike approximately 10 miles each day. We will set up base camp in Hocking Hills State Park, spot cars each day, and day-hike from one end of the Old Man's Cave section map to the other. Interested in learning more? Get details at <http://www.buckeyetrailfest.org/hiking-2018.php>.



Buckeye Trail Association MoreFest 2018

Brought to you by the Muskingum Lakes Chapter of the BTA and Ohio Morel Hunters Tuscarawas County, MoreFest is bound to be a great time for new and experienced mushroom hunters alike! Join us April 20-22, 2018, for a weekend of hiking, music, food, and Morels! Three guided hunts are scheduled throughout the weekend, giving registrants a great opportunity to work towards that 50-mile goal. Want to register or learn more? Get more information here <http://www.buckeyetrail.org/morel-fest.php>.

The 9th Annual Emma Grandma Gatewood Solstice Hike (E.G.G.S. Hike)

This signature BTA event, held at Burr Oak State Park, honors Emma "Grandma" Gatewood, a founding member of the BTA and the first female to thru-hike the Appalachian Trail. A tough-as-nails Ohio native and long-time advocate of ultra-light backpacking, it's only fitting that the event that bears her name is one of



our most challenging! The hike is brought to you by the Little Cities of the Forest chapter of the BTA and features five challenges consisting of 20 (day and night), 40, 60, and 80 miles that need to be completed in 12, 24, 36, and 48 hours respectively. Join us June 21 through 24, 2018, to participate or volunteer for this awesome event! Want to register or learn more? Visit <http://www.buckeyetrail.org/eggs.php>.

Little Loop Challenge

Last year, our Crooked River Chapter had the crazy idea to hike the entire 250 mile Little Loop of the Buckeye Trail in one day. Anything is possible when you can count on the rest of the BTA family! By dividing the loop into 77 sections for folks to hike, they were able to collectively hike the entire Little Loop in one day. It was so much fun, we're going to do it again! Want to join us on July 14, 2018, to hike one or more of the sections of the 2nd Annual Little Loop Challenge? More details coming soon to <http://www.buckeyetrail.org/LittleLoopChallenge.php>!



Run for Blue Blazes Trail Run

Brought to you by the Little Cities of the Forest Chapter of the BTA, this trail run goes through the rugged hills of Wayne National Forest. The race starts and ends in the historic village of Shawnee, home of the BTA headquarters. This challenging course is sure to be a blast! With a full marathon, half marathon, 10K, and 5K to choose from, this race is perfect for all types of trail runners. Mark your calendars for October 6, 2018, because you won't want to miss event! Interested in learning more and registering? Check out our website at <http://www.buckeyetrail.org/run4blue.php>.



BTA Chapters

Our regional chapters organize and promote all types of hikes year round! Meetup.com is a great way to get more involved with local chapters and log some more miles on the trail. You can even help them organize or lead hikes! To learn more about the different chapters we have and connect with them on social media, check out <https://www.meetup.com/pro/buckeyetrail/>!

Volunteer 5 Hours!

Looking to put in five or more hours of volunteering with the BTA? To start off, if you have not already signed up in our Volunteer Portal do so right now by visiting <http://www.buckeyetrail.org/involved.php>. This portal will help you to find volunteer opportunities outside of the Buckeye Trail Crew work schedule and you will also record your volunteer time in this portal to complete your eligibility for the 50+5 challenge! Once you have registered I will activate your account within a few days. You will

5 Ways to Volunteer 5 Hours

1. Buckeye Trail Work Crew

Come out and join a Buckeye Trail Crew Work Party for a day or weekend of work! This is a great way to meet other nature enthusiasts, learn about building and maintaining the trail we all love, and make new friends. Check out the schedule of events on page 10-12

2. Work With A Buckeye Trail Adopter

Trail Adopters are volunteers who maintain 3+ mile stretches of trail for us. Contact me to see if there is an Adopter in your area that has set aside some time to work with volunteers like you and groups that you may be a part of!

3. Events and Public Outreach

The BTA hosts many events throughout the year and we set information booths up at events throughout the state. These types of opportunities can be found by logging into the Volunteer Portal and looking at the calendar listings on the right hand side of the screen. Events need help to plan and organize as well as all kinds of volunteers on site during events. Simply click on an opportunity to find out more about the opportunity or to sign up for a shift!

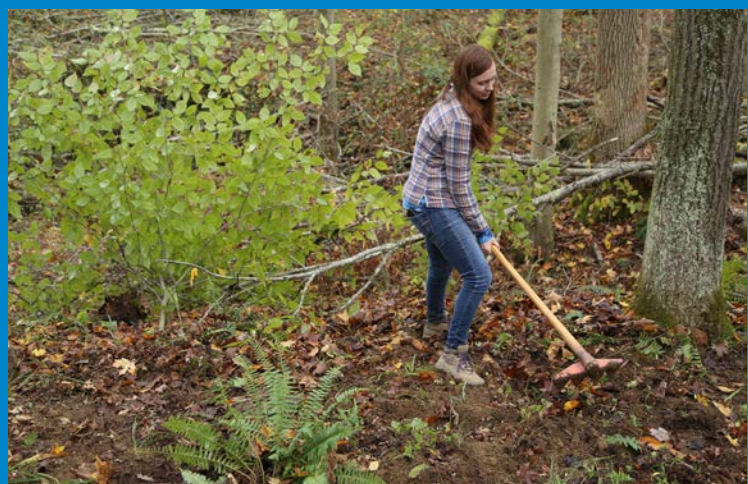
4. Create Your Own Outreach Event

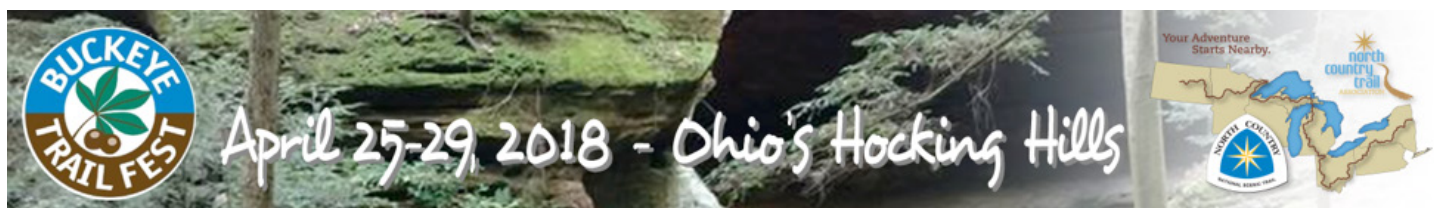
Everyone has a library close by or a community organization that may be interested in hearing about the Buckeye Trail! We have powerpoint presentation ready to go that motivated volunteers can use to put on their own presentations. If you live close to the trail why not advertise to lead a hike or host a workshop on the trail? Let us know if YOU have any ideas for unique self lead volunteer opportunities!

5. Local BTA Chapters

The BTA has 5 growing local/regional Chapters and they can use volunteer help all year round for their own volunteer and outreach events as well as Chapter leadership. Check out our Chapter webpage for descriptions and our Meetup.com site for the events that they have scheduled around the BT so far.

Any questions, great, unique ideas, or struggles with registering as a BTA Volunteer? Dont hesitate to contact volunteer@buckeyetrail.org





Buckeye TrailFest is the largest annual gathering of BT hikers, volunteers, members and enthusiasts. On April 25-29, 2018, we are proud to host our friends from all along the North Country National Scenic Trail for the Annual North Country Trail Celebration! All this during the peak of spring wildflowers and waterfall flow in the heart of Ohio's Hocking Hills at Camp Oty'Okwa!

Ohio's crown jewel, the Hocking Hills region, is an incredible area of Appalachian Ohio known for its massive rock formations, tranquil waterfalls and cascades, and jaw dropping vistas. Created by the receding waters of the last ice age that never reached this far corner of Ohio, this region is part of the unglaciated Allegheny Plateau. Formed during the Mississippian Period (325 - 360 million years ago), Ohio was near the equator and many layers of sand settled and hardened to form the distinct Black Hand Sandstone you see towering above and below. As the glaciers melted, they carved these massive gorges and hollows you will be hiking in and around as you explore and enjoy this wonderland. By our records the North Country Trail has never had an annual gathering in Ohio's Hocking Hills, after nearly 40 years we're happy to combine our annual events to rectify that situation.

Each year and each venue provides something new. In combining two great events of supportive trail families we have made some accommodations to each, and so this gathering will not be exactly like either has been before. There will be many hikes and outings, presentations and time to gather and celebrate our accomplishments and time to explore what excites you. We understand that many people attend to add BT/NCT miles. We will have plenty of "on trail" opportunities each day. This area also offers an amazing number of natural areas that are not on the official BT/NCT. We will be offering hikes in these areas as well. In fact, some of the "off trail" hikes will only be offered because you attend TrailFest Celebration. They will explore geological wonders on private property that owners are willing to open up to our event participants. One difference you may notice here is that Buckeye TrailFest has always been a first come first serve system for hike sign up. For this event, we will borrow a NCTA Celebration practice and offer a selection of pre-registration hikes, below. All hikes will have a limit on capacity to improve the hike experience and limit our environmental impact in sensitive areas. These are just a few of the many outing opportunities that will be available when you arrive.

Also, this year we will embrace the world of technology and only have online registration so that we can manage hike and accommodation capacities well. For those of you not quite ready for the full embrace, let us know. Mark Heise who has volunteered to be our TrailFest Celebration Registrar will give you a hand with pre-registration. He can be reached at 937-802-4002 or trailfest@buckeyetrail.org.



About Camp Oty'Okwa

Camp Oty'Okwa is a special place, serving Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio for 75 years. We are happy to have our event at their camp and support their great mission of supporting underserved youth. Camp Oty'Okwa is also a privately-owned 700-acre nature preserve.. This means that as a TrailFest Celebration attendee, you have access to one of the "secret" wonders of the Hocking Hills area and don't even have to leave the property. If you don't feel like hopping on the bus again, or are looking for a little more downtime, hikes led by camp naturalists will run continually throughout the schedule through the maze of split rocks, under the canopy of mature hardwoods, passed waterfalls, sandstone cliffs and expansive recess caves.





A Special Thanks to Hocking Hills Tourism Association!

They are a key sponsor for our event. Karen Raymore and staff have been there with us all the way, helping to bring our event back to the very first miles of the Buckeye Trail laid out in 1959 with the help of Grandma Gatewood herself. HHTA has also been instrumental in developing our Friday afternoon and evening programming by securing an Urban Air event in downtown Logan as part of our event. What's Urban Air? See below, Friday

evening.

Interested to hear details about our TrailFest Celebration? Read below! It all starts on Sunday with a pre-event 5-day hike. As details continue to get worked out, updates will be provided on at www.buckeyetrailfest.org and on our facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/BuckeyeTrailFest/>.

Sunday April 22 through Thursday April 26

Hike the Old Man's Cave Section Map. If your goal is to complete the entire Buckeye Trail or North Country Trail you may be interested in our planned Hike of the entire Old Man's Cave Section Map, 51.4 miles through the Hocking Hills region from Boch Hollow State Nature Preserve to Tar Hollow State Forest Sunday, April 22 till Thursday, April 26! Contact John Rethman at 513-398-9527 or ilovehiking3@cinci.rr.com to register, for free! This counts toward your 2018 100 Mile Challenge on the NCT. EXTRA BONUS – if you hike all 5 days, you'll qualify for the 2018 50 Mile Challenge Patch.

TRAILFEST CELEBRATION OFFICIALLY STARTS!

Wednesday, April 25

3PM Registration Opens

7PM A Shared Vision: A Land Managers Roundtable hosted by the North Country National Scenic Trail, National Park Service

Thursday, April 26

Meals at Camp Oty'Okwa begin with breakfast. Hikes Only on Thursday.

Thursday pre-registration hikes include:

AM - The Grandma Gatewood Trail: Old Man's Cave to Cedar Falls to Ash Cave.

Named in honor of the first female solo thru hiker of the Appalachian Trail and founding member of the Buckeye Trail Association, this is the highlight of the Hocking Hills, one of Emma 'Grandma' Gatewood's favorites. Down into the Gorge of Black Hand sandstone carved by the melt waters of receding glaciers the trail leads around CCC stone work through the giant recess cave and on to Cedar Falls. Towering cliffs, waterfalls at their peak flow, hemlock trees, rare wildflowers and remnant

plant communities from the glacial epoch make this one of the most popular outdoor destinations in the state. The hike continues past the historic fire tower, still accessible, and ends at the spectacular Ash Cave, the largest recess cave in the Midwest.

[BT/NCNST. 6 miles. Moderate. Pts. 18-21 on BT Old Man's Cave Section Map]

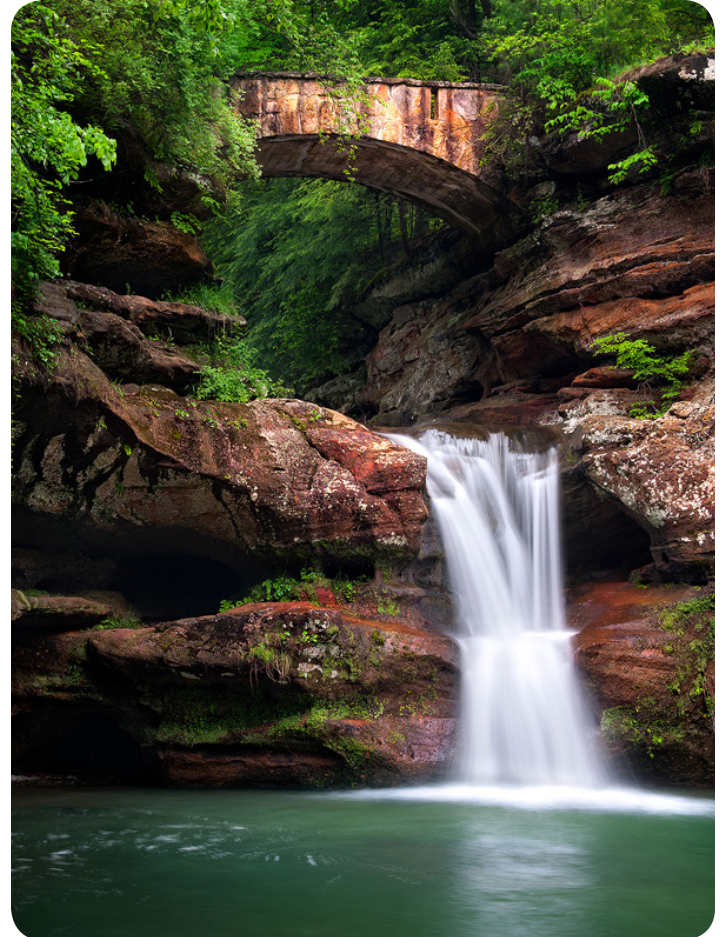
PM - Boch Hollow State Nature Preserve.

Located in northern Hocking County at the edge of the Hocking Hills Region, Boch Hollow provides an excellent opportunity to see a wide diversity of habitats ranging from riparian corridors, mature wooded hills, ridges, and old field remnants. The most notable botanical feature at Boch Hollow is the extensive population of the endangered Running Buffalo Clover – the largest such population in Ohio. In the past few years the Buckeye Trail Crew has worked with Preserve staff to construct 4 miles of the BT/NCNST through the preserve highlighting the sandstone rock outcroppings. A Boch Hollow naturalist will provide a permit only visit to scenic Robinson Falls during this educational hike.

[BT/NCNST. 6 miles. Moderate. Includes Pts. 33-34 on BT New Straitsville Section Map]

Continued on page 18

All Day - Hocking Hills Hiking Highlights. Rocky



Fork to Ash Cave

This day long hike includes everything on the Grandma Gatewood Trail above... and more! This hike adds on 9 more miles of lesser used trail including views of Rocky Fork, Big Pine Creek, Table Rock, Big Spring, and the rock climbing area. The trail wanders through deep, water carved gorges, forested slopes, moss covered sandstone and sparkling waterfalls surrounded by tall ferns.

[BT/NCNST. 15 miles. Strenuous. Pts. 14-21 on BT Old Man's Cave Section Map]

7-9PM National Park Service Volunteer Awards and Welcome and Introduction to the Hocking Hills by Hocking Hills State Park Naturalist Pat Quackenbush

Friday, April 27

Friday pre-registration hikes include:

AM - Crane Hollow Nature Preserve.

Crane Hollow Nature Preserve is a 2,000 acre privately owned dedicated state nature preserve adjacent to Hocking State Forest protected by William and Jane Ann Ellis beginning in 1977. The mission of Crane Hollow is to foster preservation, understanding, and appreciation of the plants, animals, and ecology of the hollow and surrounding area. The Preserve features a stunning community of native vegetation, along with soaring cliffs and ravines formed in Black Hand Sandstone. Because of the fragile ecosystem Crane Hollow has restricted access to protect the health of the hollow and provide a scientific research baseline for the Hocking Hills region. Join Preserve staff on a sponsored hike just for TrailFest Celebration registrants! This educational hike will lead down into the gorge and back to view and learn about the geology, waterfalls, wildflowers, and wandering without an organized trail system.

[3-4 miles. Strenuous.]

Friday Morning and Early Afternoon

Incredibly educational and inspiring presentations at Camp Oty'Okwa!

All Day - Hocking Hills Hiking Highlights. Big Pine to Ash Cave

A slightly shorter version of Thursday's day long hike includes everything on the Grandma Gatewood Trail above... and more! This hike adds on 5 more miles of lesser used trail including views of Table Rock, Big Pine Creek, Big Spring Hollow and the rock climbing area. The trail wanders through deep, water carved gorges, forested slopes, moss covered sandstone and sparkling waterfalls surrounded by tall ferns.

[BT/NCNST. 11 miles. Strenuous. Pts. 16-21 on BT Old Man's Cave Section Map]

Little Cities of Black Diamonds Tour

The Little Cities of Black Diamonds region is named for the late 1800's coal boom towns that sprang up in the Hocking Valley Coalfields. This tumultuous era saw an influx of industry,

immigrants, and Union organizers, mine strikes and deliberate mine fires. After industry cleared the forested hills and poisoned streams with mining waste Ohio's only National Forest, the Wayne National Forest, was created and the forest regenerated around these villages. Join us on a tour of our cultural and environmental heritage, from Camp Oty'Okwa to the historic Village of Shawnee and back again, that may change your view of Appalachia and learn how our BT/NCNST is part of its future. www.littlecitiesofblackdiamonds.org

Friday PM - TrailFest Celebration Goes to Town!

What better way is there to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the National Trails System Act of 1968 and the designation of 2018 as Ohio's Year of the Trails by the Ohio General Assembly than on the day that the Buckeye Trail was designated as Ohio's state trail in 1967, which was then chosen as the official Grandma Gatewood Day, than taking the Trail to town and inviting our friends from Urban Air to take over main street Logan, Ohio?

Thanks to HHTA there will be local food trucks, a showing of the inspiring Grandma Gatewood Story documentary, Trail Magic, a book signing by Ben Montgomery author of Grandma Gatewood's Walk: The Inspiring Story of the Woman Who Saved the Appalachian Trail and more. Urban Air, an Airstream user event that loves to follow the NCT (did you know that the idea for Urban Air was incubated in Rockford, MI - right along the NCT?), will gather in Logan during our TrailFest Celebration weekend. Just imagine more than 70 Airstreams lined up along the downtown streets of Logan, OH with a festive atmosphere full of local food trucks, local music and craft beer together to create their own urban campout in partnership with our BT/NCT event. There will be no supper served at camp on Friday, so come prepared to purchase some great local food and craft beer before we head back to our own campfire and a nighttime hike at Camp Oty'Okwa.

Saturday, April 28

Saturday AM and PM will be filled with more hikes and workshops. In addition, we will be offering a special Family Day to entice a new generation to the wonders of the outdoors. Our evening programming will focus on land protection, with Josh Knights, the Executive Director of the Ohio Chapter of the Nature Conservancy as our keynote speaker.

Family Day at Camp Oty'Okwa.



Crane Hollow Preserve a full schedule of fun, family friendly

We want to make sure the next generation of hikers and trail supporters is made to feel welcome into the family of the Buckeye and North Country Trail Associations. To this end, registration and onsite lodging for those 17 and under is free, meals are free for those 11 and under, and we have

programs on Saturday at Camp sponsored by Crane Hollow! The program includes short hikes on the camp preserve to amazing rock features, nature study with professional naturalists and a nature drawing workshop with local artist and instructor Norm Fox.

Saturday pre-registration hikes include:

AM -Bison Hollow Preserve.

Join renowned naturalist Paul Knoop on a guided hike to this older growth wooded preserve close to Ash Cave of Hocking Hills State Park, the reported location of one of the last native Ohio bison. The bison is now a memory but the wild beauty of Bison Hollow remains. Thanks to our friends at the Appalachian Ohio Alliance land trust these wooded acres will forever protect the singing waters of the east branch of Queer Creek, act as a buffer to Ash Cave and the nearby Buckeye Trail and provide a home for locally rare plants such as the recently discovered Autumn Coral Root Orchid.

[3-4 miles. Moderate.]

PM - BTA Pretty Run Preserve.

Purchased thanks to the Clean Ohio Trails Fund beginning in 2010, these rugged 230 acres are a showcase of the resilience of Ohio's hardwoods. Join BTA Volunteer Land Stewards on a loop hike around the preserve, passed the 1830's log cabin, hiker shelter house, wildflowers and trickling streams. Come hear how this northern Vinton County property was saved, and has since been managed to serve hikers.

[BT/NCNST. 4.5 miles. Rugged/Strenuous. Includes Pts. 23-25 on BT Old Man's Cave Section Map]

All Day - Wayne National Forest, Village of Shawnee to Dutch Ridge Hike.

Join us as we hike all day through Ohio's only National Forest! Beginning in the historic Village of Shawnee, home to the BTA office, the relationship between history and nature is apparent. The boom and bust of the late 1800's coal mining era can be seen in historic buildings on main street, and in the scars hidden in the surrounding landscape. And yet, thanks to one of America's first restoration projects and benign neglect, a beautiful and biodiverse forest has returned on these once barren hills. Join us and learn of our big plans and progress to 'Re-Boot' the Wayne as we hike through the rugged hills of the Little Cities of Black Diamonds region.

[BT/NCNST. 11 miles. Rugged/Strenuous. Includes Pts. 22-27 on BT New Straitsville Section Map]

Little Cities of Black Diamonds Tour: A repeat of Friday's tour in case you were busy!

7-8PM An evening of Trail Preservation and Land Protection. with Josh Knights, Executive Director of the Ohio Chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

8-9PM Passing of the Torches. Buckeye TrailFest and North Country Trail Celebration 2019

Sunday, April 29

7AM Chapel

Breakfast, last meal at Camp Oty'Okwa

9AM-10AM BTA Annual Meeting

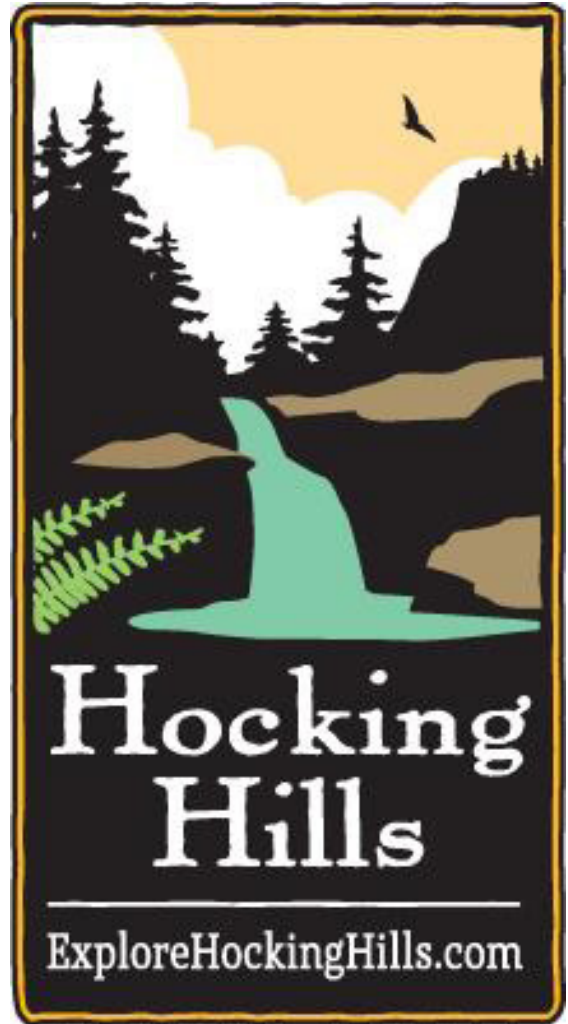
Hike on your way home! For many of you there are a lot of opportunities beyond the Hocking Hills to enjoy one more day hike on the Buckeye Trail and North Country Trail. If you missed an opportunity during TrailFest Celebration now is your chance to bag one more hollow, waterfall, cliff or Village in the region before hitting the road. Old Man's Cave, Devils Bathtub, Cedar Falls, Ash Cave, Whispering Cave, Cantwell Cliffs, Natural Bridge, Conkle's Hollow, Rock House, Airplane Rock, Little Rocky Hollow, the new John Glen Astronomy Park, the Historic Village of Shawnee, Boch Hollow Nature Preserve, Little Cities of Black Diamonds, Wayne National Forest, Main Street Logan Ohio, BR3W3RY 33, Lake Logan, Split Rocks, Counselors Cave, BTA Pretty Run Preserve, Hocking Hills State Park and Forest and more!

Please like our Facebook page and visit www.buckeyetrailfest.org for many more details on the schedule, accommodations, nearby attractions, directions and more.

Thank you for joining us, and remember, take only photos - leave only footprints.



Thank You to Our 2018 Trailfest Sponsors and Advertisers!



Crane Hollow Preserve

BIRDS IN THE HILLS

April 20-22, 2018 | Camp Oty'Okwa, OH
A Family Friendly Bird Festival

Join us for the third annual Birds in the hills Festival April 20-22. This year's festival will take place at Camp Oty'Okwa (24799 Purcell Rd, South Bloomingville, OH 43152).

A WEEKEND OF BIRDING

Birding hikes
Music
Kids activities
Presentations
Guided field trips (additional fee)
Silent auction
Beer tasting
And so much more!

KEYNOTE

Dr. Kelly Williams from Ohio University will be presenting about owls, including her research on saw-whet owls.

FESTIVAL ENTRANCE

\$10 per person
Kids under 10 free!

LODGING, FOOD, FEES

\$15 camping per night per family.
Food will be provided by Camp Oty'Okwa and sourced locally.
Coffee will be bird friendly and purchased from Dirty Girl Coffee.
Optional field trips for an additional fee.

REGISTER + INFO

Ruralaction.org/birdsinthehills/

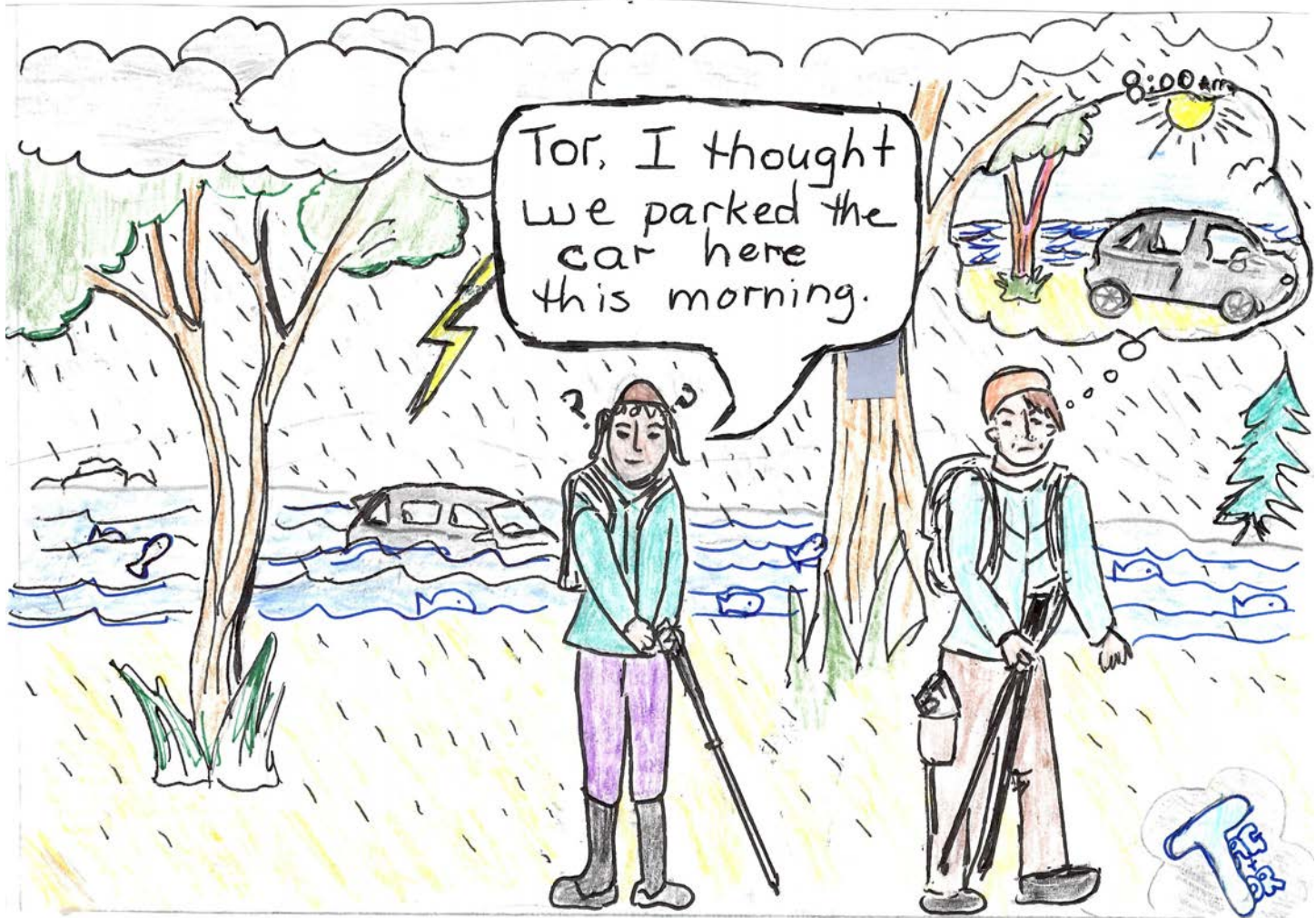
CONTACT

Joe Brehm
740-767-2225
joe@ruralaction.org



Rural Action

The Adventures of Tag and Tor



Springtime in Ohio: A Buckeye Trail Day Hike

Karen "Tagalong" Power and Jeri "Tortuga" Getts are Buckeye Trail Section hikers. They have had so many funny things happen to them on the trail that they decided to share their adventures with everyone!

Submit to the Trailblazer!

Want to see your Buckeye Trail inspired art, poetry, or stories in the Trailblazer? Submit your work to Kirsten Kueser at: trailblazer@buckeyetrail.org

Welcome to the newest Trail Town.

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Contact Andrew Bashaw for ad rates at
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The *Trailblazer* will NOT be forwarded to your new address AND the BTA incurs 70¢ charge for each undeliverable *Trailblazer*.

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Email your change of address to:



Welcome New Members!

Christine Ault, Columbus
 Olivia Ballard, Cincinnati
 Shelley Barto, Lakewood
 Peggy Bay, Mason
- Gift from Edward Heffner
 Andrea Beeks, Hilliard
 Cindy Bennett, Litchfield
 Joe Bensman, Waynesville
-Gift from Christine Bensman
 Amy Binkley, Crooksville
 Vince Bishop, Akron
 Rebecca Borello, Blue Ash
 Abigail Brady, Fredrick, MD
 Stacy Britton & Family, Middletown
 Bob Campbell, Westerville
 Matthew Childers Normal, IL
 Lori Cohen, New Albany
 Joe Crimmings, Des Moines, IA
 Jessica Croisant & Family, Stow
 Robert Crossan, Dublin
-Gift from Cynthia Crossan
 Brian Crowe, Cincinnati
 Daniel Davis, Pickerington
 Dan Davis, Westerville
 Mike Dinwiddie, Fairborn
 Chris Emmons, Gahanna
 Naisha Feliciano-Moragon, Columbus
 Ryan Ficco, Beloit
 Paul Fitzgerald, Windham
 Kimberly Folickman & Family, Pickerington
 Jerome Forner & Family, Springboro
 Edward Fouch, Brooklyn Heights
 Amy Frame, Crooksville
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 Kim Germano, Canton
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 Tifanee Hahn, New Lexington
 Justin Hanson, Dellroy
 Jan Harrison, Columbus
 Edward Heffner, Springdale

Larry Hess, Troy
 Kenneth Hoist, Beaver Falls, PA
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 Charlene Hopson & Family, Bellbrook
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 Jan Jeffries, Zanesville
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 Marissa & Nick Lautzenheiser, Mineral City
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 Gina McLean, Corning
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 Angie Marhaus, West Chester
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 Jeremy Wright, Canal Winchester
 Amie Yergin, Westerville
 Harvey Yergin, Westerville
 Joshua York & Family, Cleveland
 Matthew Yux, Oakwood
 Raul Zendejas, Johnstown

In 2018, the Buckeye Trail Association is adjusting its membership dues.

2018 Updated Prices

Student Membership:	\$15
Individual Membership:	\$30
Household Membership:	\$35
Organization Membership:	\$50
Business Membership:	\$50
Life Membership:	\$500

Please remember to send all dues to the Buckeye Trail Association, P.O. Box 5, Shawnee, OH 43782

BTA Funds Report: November 2017 - February 2018

Thank you to all of our Buckeye Trail Donors. We could not build, maintain, protect, and promote Ohio's 1,400+ mile state trail without you! Your contribution to any BTA fund is tax deductible. All contributions of \$20 or more are acknowledged. We hope to include your name in the list of contributors in the Trailblazer.

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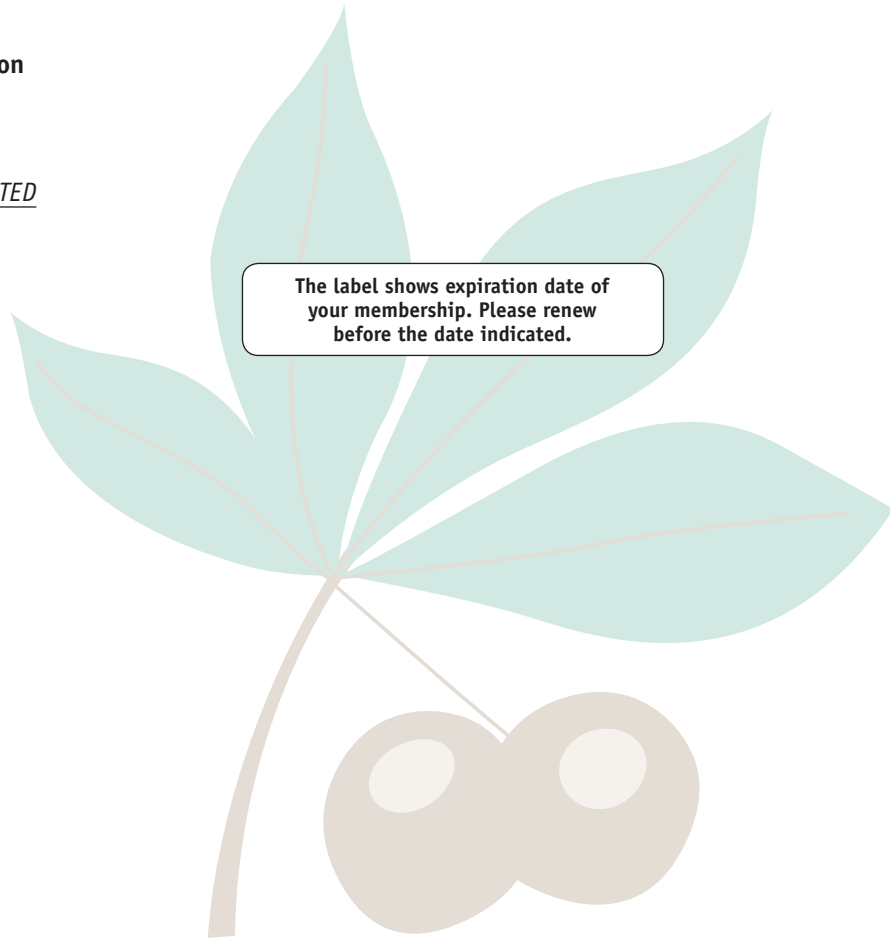


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www.buckeyetrail.org/membership.php