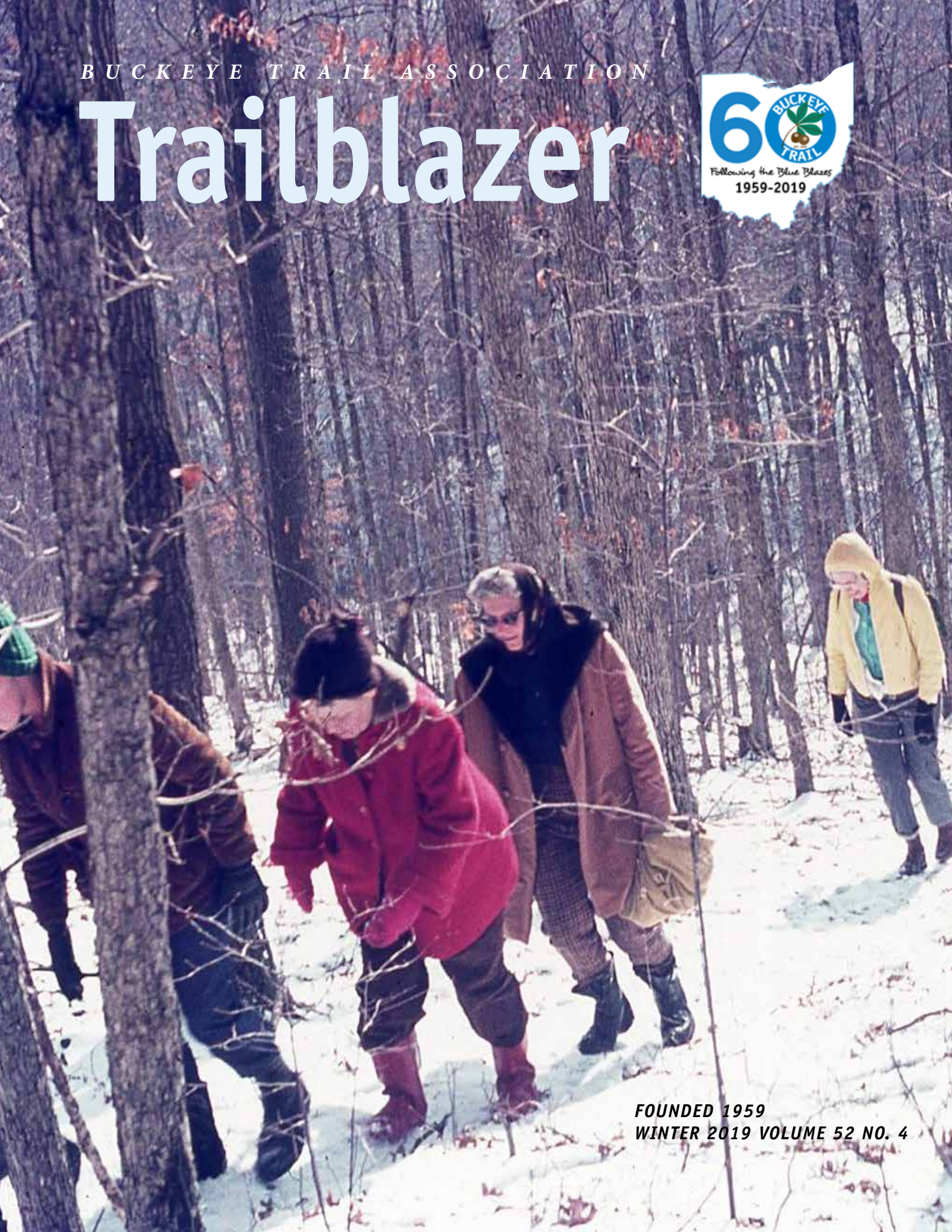


BUCKEYE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Trailblazer



FOUNDED 1959
WINTER 2019 VOLUME 52 NO. 4

Buckeye Trail Association

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Greene County Parks and its Director

Article by Mark Heise

*Xenia, Ohio
Caesar Creek Section
Miami Rivers Chapter
December 2019*

Greene County Parks and Trails have been a friend of the Buckeye Trail for more than 20 years, and took a leadership role in “closing the loop.”

Just as the Buckeye Trail has grown over the years, so have our partners at GCP&T. On December 18th, Greene County Parks will cut the ribbon on their new parks headquarters.



Jon Dobney, Director of Greene County Parks

The new HQ was planned and built with serving their community and partners in mind. This was only possible because of a Parks Levy that was renewed this year, showing the great support Greene County citizens have for Parks and Trails in their area and the vision of their Director, Jon Dobney.

Dobney has been the Director of Greene County Parks and Trails for the past two years, coming out of retirement from a long and distinguished career at Ohio State Parks. Having spent 37 years in Ohio State Parks, he spent much of his times as Manager of Caesar Creek State Park before taking two tours as Assistant Chief of Parks, serving as the Southern Ohio Regional Director between the two tours. Dobney recently received the Harvey Woods Lifetime Achievement Award from Ohio Parks & Recreation Association.

He has certainly been a friend of the Buckeye Trail and continues in his present position. His emphasis on innovation in GCP&T in concert with the levy renewal promises some great potential improvements on the Buckeye Trail on the Caesar Creek Section. We will keep you posted as these emerge.

President's Message

Steve Walker

The sun is about to set on our 60th Anniversary year and many new things are happening as we move into 2020. A lot was accomplished in 2019 and things don't seem to be slowing down for 2020. The new year will show some positive results from work that was started before!

The Buckeye Trail Association's five year strategic plan, known as BTA 2025 is ready to publish in the form of an executive summary. The full version is still in the development stage and will be a living document that will adapt and change as items are completed or goals are adjusted or changed. The project began at the 2017 Board and Staff Retreat and the BTA Board has been involved throughout the process. At each Retreat since then, the Board has spent considerable time refining the original "Big Ideas" into an assortment of goals and finally into seven major goals (four of which have two goals each). Earlier in 2019, new BTA Board Member Rory Robinson was asked to guide the final execution of the strategic plan process and bring this important document to paper for all of you to read. The Executive Summary of BTA 2025 will be in place by January 1, 2020 and the full plan will be used to guide our organization on its five year journey to 2025.

The other big thing that will take place in 2020 will be the occupancy of the 129 Project, our newly refurbished headquarters building (conveniently located right next to our current headquarters). It should triple the current

space available for our staff to do their jobs supporting the BTA membership. Lots of financial and remodeling support has happened since work began in earnest back in July. A new metal roof has been installed over the rear part of the building that covers the kitchen and bathroom as well as a brand new deck. The original main slate roof has been repaired. With some research (and luck), new wood siding that matched the original upstairs siding was sourced and the exterior of the building now has a consistent appearance. New modern windows are also being installed. The electric service and wiring as well as all plumbing will be new.

Although many wonderful volunteers took part in this work and continue to take part, I would like to highlight one of them. He has long been a fixture at Buckeye Trail Crew work parties and has led the monthly circuit hikes for several years that have introduced many folks to the Buckeye Trail and helped many of them in their goal to finish hiking the Buckeye Trail. By doing this, he has also managed to complete the Buckeye Trail twice. Since early in the 129 Project, Jim Gilkey has been a regular volunteer helping to refurbish our new headquarters. Many others have been helping also and the list includes Herb Hulls, Dan Campbell, Susan Stover, Susie Hulls, Mary Hamilton, Jeff Yoest, Terry Blackstone, Jim Runk, Pat Hayes, Mark Shubert, Richard Lutz, Charles Gordon and Andrew Bashaw. I was there some of the time as well as many others. The list is too long for me to remember them all and I apologize if I forgot anyone.

Most of what I talk about in the





Trailblazer is about our amazing volunteers and hoping to recruit some of you to join that great group. This article will be no different. All of our new committees have been meeting regularly and have made plans to move their missions forward in 2020. If helping out with the Development Committee, the Awards Committee, the Membership Committee or the Personnel Committee interest you, please let me know and I'll hook you up. The Buckeye Trail Crew and your local chapters also need your help. There are many opportunities to grow and enhance the Buckeye Trail and the Buckeye Trail Association. I encourage you to consider finding your mission to do that. Here's hoping that you all have a safe and happy 2020 and find a way to enjoy the Buckeye Trail and the great folks that support it.





On the Trail

Perhaps by the time you read these words there may be a blanket of snow on the Buckeye Trail. While the BT never sleeps its time to put 2019 to bed, raise a warm drink to 60 years of hiking our trail, and look to the year ahead. During the last part of the year many families have traditions of listing what they are most thankful for as they enter a season of giving and finally wishes and resolutions for the future.

Looking back over this year helps me realize how proud I am, more than ever, to be part of the Buckeye Trail with you. I am thankful for the presents the BT has received during our 60th birthday. You may remember from the last Trailblazer magazine that a flurry of multi-year efforts were realized. Nearly 25 new miles of the BT was opened for hiking at the Edge of Appalachia Preserve, Wayne National Forest, and Caldwell Lake all within a month. And, who knew that there were 31,000 acres left in Ohio to acquire in part for the BT? Governor DeWine and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources deserve a huge thank you from the BTA, the Ohio Trails Partnership, and conservation, hunting, and fishing communities for preserving AEP ReCreation Lands for generations to come!

Many of these wishes for the BT came true thanks to a perfect recipe of hard work, support and partnership by BTA volunteers, members and partners. It feels great to take a deep breath for a moment and enjoy the accomplishments of our 60th year, but even after a big holiday meal a good appetite eventually returns. I don't think we want more of everything; members, volunteers, miles off

road, etc. because we are gluttons, I believe the 'more' we want is constant progress toward an ever improving Buckeye Trail experience all around Ohio.

I am thankful for each of our BTA volunteers, for the time and energy they put in to the trail and people they care so much for. And, for all the patience they show with other volunteers, staff, and partners on this particularly long and complicated project called the BT.

I am thankful for you, our members, who give so generously to the BTA, financially yes, but just as importantly giving your attention to the BTA in a time of increasing distractions. It means the BT and BTA are important enough to compete with the struggles of life and are entwined into the joys of your life as the BT was originally intended to do. I can only hope that standing on the BT, marveling at a moment, the thought occurs to you that 'I, as a BTA member, help make all of this happen, for everyone' and helps to make your generosity worthwhile.

I am thankful for all of our partners and all of the work they invest in building, maintaining, protecting, and promoting the BT, sometimes unaware of the mission and vision of the BTA. Our annual operating budget for the BTA hovers around \$200,000, imagine what the true annual investment actually is beyond our relatively small nonprofit. If only we were able to account for all the metro park work across 47 counties, ODNR work at 18 State Parks, 5 State Forests, Wildlife Areas, Natural Areas and Preserves, the work of staff at the Wayne National Forest, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Muskingum Water-



Photo credit to Bob Merkle

shed Conservancy and many more. Don't get me wrong, BTA volunteers are there too, but the true investment in the idea of the BT is incredible.

But, the things I am most personally thankful to the BT for are the simplest ones. There are little presents in little moments that I find all along the trail. A new landscape to explore like a kid, a new experience shared with a new friend or a moment to myself to renew a sense of peace. There is a new sense of fulfillment at a job well done during trail work, a new fern or warbler discovered, a new or deeper appreciation for the people who travelled and lived here before.

I've had the good fortune to sit and listen to BTA volunteers nearly 60 years my elder sharing stories around campfires and kitchen tables about overcoming challenges, accomplishing great projects, regrets of missed opportunities, and work to be done by our next generation. On the other hand I am also lucky. I get to see the world, and our BT as well, through the eyes of the next generation

just now being born. I have the honor and the duty to share our stories with kids on their first hike, teenagers opening their minds, and young adults finding the BT for themselves because they weren't as lucky as I was being surrounded by nature as a kid. Each of us is an important link in the present between our grandparents and our grandchildren's generation, we are an important piece of our family story that can span 200 years.

For all these reasons I think the Buckeye Trail is Ohio's greatest idea, slowly revealing itself a little more each generation. I'm excited to be a part of the Buckeye Trail today, and I hope you are too! Thank you for spending your valuable time with the BTA. I hope to hear and share the presents you find along the trail in the year ahead that help you realize you are an important part of Ohio's Buckeye Trail.

Hope to see you on the Trail this Winter!

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@buckeyetrailassociation



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BTA Funds Report

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.

AUGUST 2019 TO NOVEMBER 2019

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Mary Sturgis
Michael Kohr
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Peter Griesinger
Robert Merkle, In memory of John "Jack" Brennan
Ted Shigley
William Katzin

129 PROJECT SHAWNEE, OH

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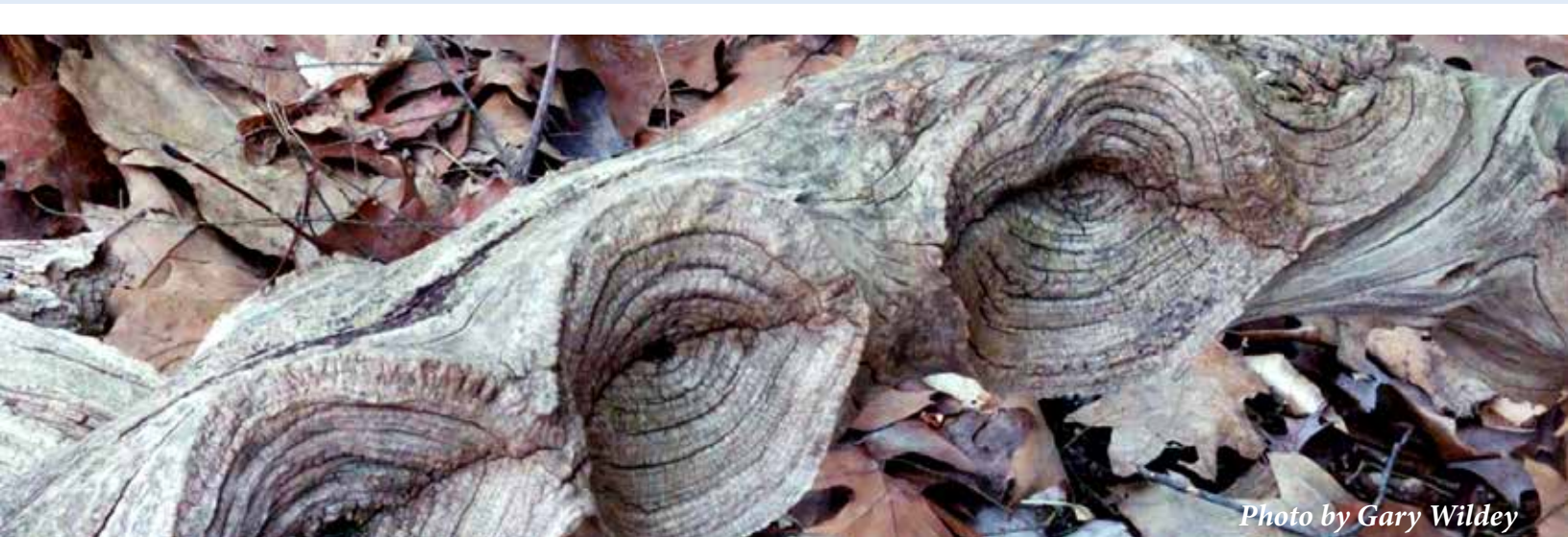


Photo by Gary Wildey

WE NEED YOU!



SPONSORSHIPS

TrailFest is the largest annual gathering of Buckeye Trail hikers, volunteers and outdoor enthusiasts. In addition to serving the Buckeye Trail Association's mission "to the building, maintaining, protecting and promoting Ohio's longest scenic hiking trail", TrailFest is a weekend of education, resource sharing and fellowship. Each year TrailFest is moved around the state to highlight local portions of the trail and nearby communities. Your sponsorship of TrailFest helps promote your involvement and love of the outdoors and helps the Buckeye Trail share our mission with the outdoor community. Buckeye TrailFest would not be possible without the kindness of our friends, members and local business partners. Sponsors and donors allow us to provide a reasonably priced event to all participants.

Contact: Andrew Bashaw, Executive Director, BTA
director@buckeyetrail.org or 740-394-2008

Enjoying the Trails in *Winter*



Article by Bryan Wolf

For me, winter provides a look at a totally new landscape, and a different trail. I can visit my favorite place again and again but no matter what, it will be a different experience come winter. The snow cleanses as it puts a perfect white dusting over everything; the frost gives a shimmer to the trees, and the skies turn a radiant blue that reflects off the ice.

There is a moment every year where I can barely contain my excitement as I pull out my favorite wool sweater, or again when I light my first bonfire and hold my hands over the flame. I find solitude in the cool breeze rushing through the almost empty trails. Perhaps above all, I find myself with a sense of peace that can only be achieved when sweat stops burning my eyes and the nagging itch of mosquito bites finally secedes.

While winter is my favorite season, it, of course, comes with its own challenges. Through my own adventures, I've learned a few tricks to making the most of the cold weather.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Bryan is an owner of Roads Rivers and Trails and an adventure outfitter in Milford, Ohio. He takes several winter trips every year, including his thru-hike of the Appalachian Trail, backpacking in the Smokey Mountains, Roan Highlands, Dolly Sods, and winter summits that include Mt. Washington.

You can visit RRT for advice, attend one of their free presentations, or join them on a winter hike this year.

For more information visit: roadsriversandtrails.com



Here are some tips to enjoying a winter wonderland this year:

- **STAY WARM!** The best thing about winter is the ability to regulate your own temperature. Take lots of layers including hats, gloves, and a buff to constantly accessorize yourself to fit both the temperature and your exertion. Taking multiple clothing options will allow you to find your perfect balance. Dress like an onion.
- **TREAT YOURSELF.** It's all about having fun, not about misery. Take a few heat packs for your hands and feet and don't hesitate to use them. If you're leaving home on a day hike, heat up some warm cider in an insulated bottle and warm up from the inside out as you go.
- **HAPPY FEET, HAPPY HIKING.** While not everyone needs insulated boots, it is important to have waterproof boots and heavier wool socks to keep yourself warm and dry. Even if you start out warm, the sweat that collects in your cotton sock will cool you 3 times faster than wool.
- **DON'T LET A BREEZE TAKE THE WIND OUT OF YOUR SAILS.** While it may not be raining outside, a waterproof jacket or pants can make a great barrier against the wind while retaining an additional layer of heat. Ventilating zippers (pit zips) will keep you from getting too hot.
- **GOING FOR YOUR FIRST OVERNIGHT?**
- A hot water bottle will keep your toes toasty in your sleeping bag, if you have to go to the bathroom don't hold it and adding a liner to your sleeping bag can make all the difference in getting a good night's sleep.

7th Annual Buckeye Trail Winter Hike & Potluck Feast



JANUARY 4, 2020
CAESAR CREEK STATE PARK

Seven hikes to choose from ranging from 3 to 12 miles

Join the Dayton Hikers group for a winter hike on the Buckeye Trail at Caesar Creek State Park. Afterward, enjoy a potluck dinner at the Caesar Creek Visitor Center.



Hikes start between
9:00 am and 12:30 pm.
All hikes finish by 2:00 pm
for the potluck dinner.

Sponsored By Dayton Hikers

www.winterhike.com



Pretty Run BTA Annual Winter Campout

Date: January 11-12 2020

Time::

Location: We will camp at the BTA's Pretty Run Preserve . Dog friendly, no electric, high vehicle clearance access only - creek crossing with high entrant/exit. Please bring your own equipment for cold weather, water, and chairs; we'll provide the fire.

Description: Always a highly anticipated weekend by some die-hards, the BTA Annual Winter Campout is back! Join us at the Pretty Run Preserve for camping, hiking, fire, and camaraderie.

Space is limited. RSVP by January 4 at oldmanscave@buckeyetrail.org

55th Annual Hocking Hills Winter Hike

Date: January 18, 2020

Time: 9-11 A.M.

Location: Old Man's Cave State Park

Description: The Hocking Hills Winter Hike winds through Hocking Hills State Park for about 6 miles highlighting ice formations on caves and waterfalls. The trail starts at the park campground and continues to the Upper Falls of Old Man's Cave. Hikers are led in small groups on an interpretive walk to this point, and then left to finish the hike at their own pace past Cedar Falls and ending at Ash Cave.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park Winter Warm-Ups Hike

Date: January 19th 2020

Time: 9 A.M. start est 2.5 hour hike

Location: Ira Trailhead 3801 Riverview Road, Peninsula

Description: Challenge yourself on the unpaved, hilly Buckeye and O'Neil Woods trails. 7 miles. Fast paced. Ira Trailhead. Though a short distance from the urban areas of Cleveland and Akron, Cuyahoga Valley National Park seems worlds away. The park is a refuge for native plants and wildlife, and provides routes of discovery for visitors. The winding Cuyahoga River gives way to deep forests, rolling hills, and open farmlands. Walk or ride the Towpath Trail to follow the historic route of the Ohio & Erie Canal. For anyone looking to get their heart rate up and legs moving, these hikes are fast-paced and fitness focused on hilly and rocky trails.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day Hike at Hueston Woods

Date: January 20

Time: 8:00am breakfast may be purchased at the lodge, 9:00am hike begins

Location: Hueston Woods Lodge

Description: Hueston Woods State Park, located in Butler and Preble counties, has nearly 3,000 acres of outdoor recreation, such as hiking, fishing, canoeing, and unique to this region -- fossil hunting. The park surrounds 625-acre Acton Lake, with campsites, cabins, and a resort lodge. The hike will be 11 miles long around the lake with soup beans will served at the halfway point at Hueston Room at the Nature Center by BTA volunteers. Shuttle back to the lodge is available at the halfway mark. Lodging: <https://www.huestonwoodslodge.com/>

Findley State Park

Date: February 1st, 2020

Time: 10a.m.

Distance: 5k and 10k

Location: Wyandot & Hickory Trail, Meet at the campground pavilion.

Description: Located in northeast Ohio, 838-acre. Findley State Park was once a state forest and is heavily wooded with stately pines and various hardwoods. A highlight is the park's trail system, including a connection to the statewide Buckeye Trail. The park's forests, meadows and quiet waters offer a peaceful backdrop for camping, boating and hiking.

BRRRRR Oak Winter Hike

Date: Feb 8th

Time: 10a.m.-4p.m.

Location: Burr Oak State Park

Description: Join us in the hills for scenic vistas across Burr Oak Lake, meander through the forest and around rock outcroppings, take a short side trip to Buckeye Cave, keep your eye out for the Burr Oak eagles, and return to the warmth of the fire at Burr Oak Lodge or camp. Come for the fun, stay for the Night! 3, 5, or 8 mile options available.

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Heather Anderson and Maureen Beck*



TheAdventureSummit.com

Campsite/Shelter Development Update

Richard Lutz

Hello all! I know you haven't heard from me for a while regarding a campsite update, but I figured this is a good time to catch everyone up. Of course at least one site has been in a past Trailblazer but it's time to catch everyone up with the updates. This time we have one shelter and one campsite to note. Once again, as always I have to note that none of them would be possible without our partners around the state of Ohio and generous donors. So here are the updates:

Imhoff Shelter

A new shelter has existed since last fall, however as of September 23rd the trail has been opened past the shelter out to Township Road 241. For the recently posted trail alert on our website here is more information: “Purify water from Dan's Run. Use minimum impact techniques. To access the shelter, follow the trail 0.3 mi W from Pt 27 to a 3-way trail intersection. Take the side trail 200' W to the shelter (39.60049°N, 82.29968°W).”



Edge of Appalachia Campsite

Thanks The Nature Conservancy, we now have a campsite available at the Edge of Appalachia Preserve System. To borrow some words from Jim Sprague, who writes our trail alerts: “This campsite is located along the trail between the Moon Hollow Trailhead (Pt A) and Blue Creek Rd (Pt B). You must possess a free, written permit from The Edge of Appalachia Preserve. Contact the preserve at either ohio@tnc.org or 937-544-2188 x13 for your permit. No facilities are available at the campsite. Find water at the stream you will cross about 0.16 mi from Moon Hollow Rd. Camp only in the designated area which is about 0.8 mi from the road. Open fires are prohibited; use all “leave-no-trace” camping procedures. Camp near the Carsonite post located a little E or W of the trail. No more than four individuals may occupy the campsite at any one time. Your stay is limited to one night.” Special Thanks once again goes out to the Nature Conservancy staff for supporting this!

In other news, unfortunately the campground in Napoleon (Susie Q's) has shut down. We are in the process of trying to replace the campground with a campsite in that area.

As you can see from the map (the dots marked with red), we still need help. 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're interested in helping with camp site development, please feel free to contact the Trail Preservation Committee at preservation@buckeyetrail.org. Stay tuned, more sites may be in the pipeline!

A Buckeye Trail

Written by Kathy Fix, photos by Gary Wildey

Slog, slog, slog, through the mud, mud, mud,

And climb up every hill

Trudge along under burning sun

Or rain and winds that chill

Curse at brambles that catch your skin

And bugs that find you out

Curse blue blazes that run thin

And dogs that make you shout

We get blisters and tired feet

along the Buckeye Trail

Fields of wildflowers in the spring

And hunters in the fall

Kiss of sunshine summer brings

Cold winter's quiet call

There are eagles on the wing

And manmade wonders too

Peacefulness that nature brings

With deer throughout the wood

There is history and farmers' fields

along the Buckeye Trail

Oh, Ohio you've taught us much

With rivers, rocks, and trees

Ancient folk and canals and such

Coal fires and burial fields

We have learned of your histories

And learned of airship's falls

Walked through carpets of noisy leaves

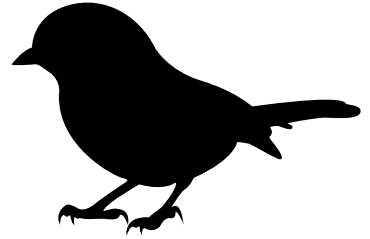
Seen murals on town walls

There are vistas and mysteries

along the Buckeye Trail



Fight Song



There are angels across the state
Who help along the way
There is sunshine on your face
Ice cream to make our day
Keep the friends that you make out there
The roads and paths and trails
Keep the mem'ries you all share
Of waterfalls and dales

Remember all of the miles and days
Those hours along the trail
Til the day you can finally say
I've hiked the Buckeye trail!
We've finished the Buckeye trail!

There are footprints that you leave
Along the Buckeye Trail



A HIKING SPIKE ON OHIO'S BUCKEYE TRAIL

Article and Photos by CW Spencer

November 11, 2019

It was hard to miss the long line of hikers crossing the Little Miami River in Milford, Ohio on the sunny afternoon of October 20. Close observers might have even noticed a tear coursing its way down the cheek of a hiker or two.

Those tears were most likely generated by a mixture of emotions. Joy in the completion of a five-year 1,400-plus-mile journey around the state of Ohio on the Buckeye Trail. And at the same time, possibly sadness that in a few hundred yards they would be finishing the trail and leaving behind those who had walked together with them such a great distance.

Earlier these hikers had compiled their thoughts and feelings. One lady wrote that this

hike had gotten her out of the house at a low point in her life and connected her with like-minded people at a time when she was feeling quite alone. Wow. I started hiking the Buckeye Trail for similar purposes. Another wrote that it had been nice to hang around others and get tired and sweaty together. I can relate, especially with the sweat.

On that beautiful fall day, eight happy hikers completed what just may be one of the biggest accomplishments of their lives. I know the feeling. Bonnie and I just finished the Buckeye Trail ourselves.

It was not only a day to celebrate a special event, but a special person as well, a man named Jim Gilkey. One group member described Jim as an angel on earth, always willing to do anything for a fellow hiker. (He is capable of being devilish as well, though. More on that in just a bit.)

Another hiker said, "Jim has done a fabulous job with logistics and taking care of us all." And still another, "Jim plans well and is careful to ensure that everyone stays safe." I know Jim well. I have hiked with him many times, and I agree completely with those assessments. You'd have to walk a long way to find someone who would disagree.





Jim first heard of the Buckeye Trail in 1959 when he was in the seventh grade. He was cutting out every newspaper clipping he could find on Ohio for an Ohio history assignment. He put two articles in his folder about the newly formed trail, but then the trail was lost on him for decades after his project was graded and stored away.

About 20 years ago Jim picked up a pamphlet about the trail at the Ohio State Fair. Later he began hiking with a group in Dayton's Five Rivers Metroparks, then found a group in the Columbus area. In 2007 he became a member of the Buckeye Trail Association and went on a six-mile orientation hike led by Chris McIntyre and John Rethman. He enjoyed that so much that he continued

on a section-by-section trip around the entire trail, finishing early in 2014.

Even before he finished that journey he was dreaming of another one. This one would be to lead a hike for others back around the same circuit. He wanted more people to experience the same joy Ohio had given him. He started in the fall of 2014 and finished this fall.

Jim's dream has touched many lives, more than just the seven who finished with him that day. Some hiked only a weekend or two in various sections of the state. Others hiked hundreds of miles with Jim but had already finished. Still others joined him more recently along the Buckeye Trail, and have many more miles



Jim finished lunch on the trail early one day and quickly became bored. The middle schooler in him surfaced; he stealthily tucked a heavy bolt he had found into George Tyo's backpack. George carried that burden the rest of the day. He carried it the next day as well, blaming the heaviness on everything except the sneaky culprit. When he emptied his pack at home, he discovered the bolt. Game on.

The next month, George slipped a railroad spike into Jim's pack. Jim's pack is so heavy anyway he hardly noticed. He carries one of everything in case one of his group needs something. I'm guessing no one would need a railroad spike, though.

After Jim discovered it, George's pack was never safe again. But a funny thing happened. Rather, didn't happen. Jim didn't remove the spike. He carried it all the way to the end. Maybe a good leader does penance when he starts trouble.

Since Jim wouldn't give his spike up, George found a duplicate to make a trophy for him. I'm sure the engraving speaks for the entire group: Thank you for carrying the load for all of us.

Want to read more from CW Spencer?

Go to: <https://cwspencer.com/>

to go yet. I'm sure one thought on their minds is who will step up to lead them on.

This circuit hike would not be official until hands were laid on the pole bearing the triple blue blaze at the top of the hill. You might spot it the next time you pass the Milford Trailhead on the Little Miami Scenic Bike Trail.

What do the three blazes signify? I'm glad you asked. The top right blaze directs hikers to the Williamsburg section, the top left blaze northward through the Loveland section, and the bottom back to the southern terminus in Eden Park. To this group, it also marked the location they'd passed five years earlier with the intention of one day returning. And that day had now come—sixty years after Jim had tucked that Ohio history folder on the shelf.

The pole touching was followed by a celebration in Riverside Park. Food, speeches, and tears were abundant. It was apparent that this group had bonded closely during their five-year journey. It's no easy task taking on the entire Buckeye Trail.

It wasn't all sweat, subzero temperatures, hills, territorial dogs, ticks, and blisters, though. This group had their share of fun! They took in the great scenery and history of Ohio. They ate meals together. They hiked as pirates on National Pirate Day. Jen and Maria were dubbed The Princess Hikers because they stayed in hotels each weekend rather than tents. Towards the end of the hike that became a status symbol, even for the other ladies. And, as with most closely-knit groups, there was a prank or two. One got started by, you guessed it, Jim Gilkey himself.





2019 Schedule of Hikes & Events

Always check <https://buckeyetrail.org/> for more information and last-minute updates

JANUARY

January 4, 2020

7th Annual BTA Hike and Winter Feast

Description: The hikes begin at different times from 9AM to 12:30PM, but all hikes will end by 2:30PM.

Location: Caesar Creek Visitor Center, pot luck in the Conference Room, 4020 Clarksville Rd, Waynesville OH

Meal: Pot luck feast starting at 2:00PM.

Contact: See the Dayton Hikers web page at www.daytonhikers.org for all the details and to register.

January 11-12, 2020

BTA Annual Winter Campout

Description: Join us at the Pretty Run Preserve on for camping, hiking, fire, and camaraderie. See you there!

Meals: We will have a pot luck Saturday night. **Camping:** We will camp at the BTA's Pretty Run Preserve

Contact: Space is limited so RSVP by January 4 at oldmanscave@buckeyetrail.org soon.

January 12, 2020

Heritage Trails District Buckeye Trail Winter Hike Series

Location: Lockkeepers House, 22 S. Water St., New Bremen OH.

Time: 1pm-3pm

January 25, 2020

BTA Board Meeting 10:00AM

Location: TBD

Contact: Steve Walker at president@buckeyetrail.org

MARCH

March 12, 2020

Thru-Hiking the Buckeye Trail

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

Presenter: Andy Niekamp

Location: 6:30PM at the Beaver Creek Community Library, 3618 Dayton Xenia Rd, Beaver Creek, OH 45432

Contact: <https://greenelibrary.info/location/beaver-creek-community-library-events/>

APRIL

April 15-19, 2020

Work Week in the Wayne National Forest, New Straitsville Section

Description: Join us to expand and improve the trail's offerings to residents and visitors to the Buckeye Trail Town through the scenic hills of Appalachian Ohio's Little Cities of Black Diamonds region.

Camping: Tentatively in the village of Shawnee at GPS

coordinates 39.60919° -82.2221°. We will leave for the work site at 8:30 AM and work until 3:30 PM.

Meals: This is also a Chuck Wagon event

Contact: For questions about this work party contact Andrew Bashaw at director@buckeyetrail.org or phone 740-394-2008

April 25-29, 2020

Buckeye Trail Crew Work Party in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Akron Section

Camping: Work Party Headquarters will be at Ottawa Point, 41.30165, -81.60012, in the Cleveland Metroparks. We will leave camp for the work site at 8:30 AM and work until 3:30 PM.

Meals: This is a Chuck Wagon event.

Contact: Sunny Sunyak at akron@buckeyetrail.org

April 29-May 1, 2020

BTA TrailFest at Camp Manatoc, Peninsula OH, Akron Section

MAY

May 1, 2020

BTA Board Meeting 10:00AM

Location: At TrailFest

Contact: Steve Walker at president@buckeyetrail.org

May 8-10, 2020

BTA Morefest

Location: BTA Barn near Deersville OH

Contact: MuskingumLakes@buckeyetrail.org

May 16-20, 2020

Buckeye Trail Crew Work Party at the Bill Miller Trail Head, Old Man's Cave Section

Description: Get involved, get connected, and get dirty by helping reestablish the Bill Miller Trail trailhead near scenic Lake Logan.

Camping: Hocking Soil & Water - Bishop Educational Garden 13200 Little Cola Rd, Rockbridge, OH 43149 39.546880° -82.621648°. The trail crew will leave at 8:00 AM and work until 3:00PM.

Meals: Meals will be provided by the BTA for the first 20 volunteers to sign up at: chuckwagon@buckeyetrail.org

Contact: Byron Guy (oldmanscave@buckeyetrail.org) for work party information and to RSVP.

May 23 & 24, 2020

Buckeye Trail Crew Work Party at Mandale in the Delphos Section

Description: We will leave camp at 8:00AM for the worksite and work until 3:00PM.

Camping: Camping will be available at 10633 Rd 179, Oakwood, OH 45873 GPS coordinates: 41.13105° -84.42789°

Meals: You need to supply your own food and water.

JUNE

June 3-7, 2020

Buckeye Trail Crew Work Party in the Delphos Section

June 6 & 7, 2020

Buckeye Trail Crew Work Party at Wildcat Hollow in the New Straitsville Section

Description: This is a work weekend in preparation for the E.G.G.S. Hike June 25-28, 2020 at Burr Oak State Park/Wildcat Hollow.

June 13-17, 2020

Buckeye Trail Crew Work Party at AEP in the Stockport Section

Description: Help us keep open this stretch of the Buckeye Trail in a very unique part of Ohio. The Trail Crew will leave at 8:00 AM and work until 3:00 PM.

Camping: Hook Lake, Campground A 9160 N. St. Rt. 83, McConnelsville, OH 43756.

Meals: This is also a Chuck Wagon event

Contact: Herb Hulls (53hulls41@windstream.net or 740-787-2416)

JULY

July 11-15, 2020

Buckeye Trail Crew Work Party in the Road Fork and Whipple Sections

Description: The Trail Crew will leave at 8:00 AM and work until 3:00 PM.

Camping: The Little Muskingum Watershed Association OH-26 & Township Road 88 New Matamoras, Ohio 45767. 39.54197, -81.22468

Meals: This is also a Chuck Wagon event

Contact: Tom Rohr (419-281-7465) for work party info

July 18, 2020

Little Loop Challenge and Beyond!

Location: BTA Little Loop

Contact: Littleloop@buckeyetrail.org

July 25 & 26, 2020

Buckeye Trail Crew Work Party at the Edge of Appalachia in the West Union Section

Description: This will be a maintenance weekend on the 14+ mile trail through the Edge of Appalachia. Each day the Trail Crew will leave at 8:00 AM and work until 3:00 PM.

Camping: 1190 Long Lick Road, Stout, Ohio 45684.

The drive way entrance is at GPS point 38.669312° -83.346235°. Once on the dirt driveway, it is .42 miles to the site. You will pass one house on the right. Keep going. You will cross a small bridge on the steep and graveled driveway up to the second house. It is recommended that campers set up in the field on the right just before the steep driveway.

Meals: You will need to provide your own food and water

Contact: For questions about the work party and to RSVP contact Richard Lutz at tmt_chair@buckeyetrail.org

AUGUST

August 1 & 2, 2020

BTA Board of Trustees Retreat at the BTA Barn near Deersville, OH

Contact: Steve Walker at president@buckeyetrail.org

August 29-Sept. 2, 2020

Work Week in the Scioto Trail Section at Tar Hollow State Park

Description: http://forestry.ohiodnr.gov/Portals/forestry/PDFs/plans/d4_annual.pdf. We will leave for the work site at 8:00 AM and work until 3:00 PM

Camping: Dogwood Shelter located on South Ridge Rd at GPS coordinates 39.349245° -82.768800°

Meals: This is also a Chuck Wagon event,

Contact: Deven Atkinson at sciototrail@buckeyetrail.org

SEPTEMBER

September 19-23, 2020

Buckeye Trail Crew Work Party in the New Straitsville Section

Description: Wayne National Forest (Athens Unit) Run for Blue Blazes Marathon Prep - Buckeye Trail Crew Work Party. This event will prepare the route for the annual Run for Blue Blazes Marathon/Half Marathon/10K/5K on Oct. 6. The trail crew will be working from 8:30am to 3:30pm

Camping: Near the village of Shawnee, the site TBD.

Meals: This is also a Chuck Wagon event

Contact: Herb Hulls (53hulls14@windstream.net or 740-787-2416).

9th Annual BUCKEYE TRAILFEST

in Cuyahoga Valley National Park



APRIL 30–MAY 3, 2020
Camp Manatoc • Peninsula, Ohio

***The Buckeye TrailFest offers a long weekend
packed full of hikes, workshops, presentations,
speakers and social opportunities***

The Crooked River Chapter is excited to play host to the 2020 Buckeye Trailfest. We are going to show off the beauty and richness of the Cuyahoga Valley in spectacular way. Whether you are local or from a more distant part of the state, you are sure to have a fantastic time! You will wish it was longer.

***Come for the whole weekend or come for the day!
There is something for everyone!***

GET HIKING

Join us for led and self led hikes on the Buckeye Trail and other trails. All skill levels—easy, moderate, difficult.

GET DIRTY

Join a trail crew and help build a section of trail. Learn from the best.



GET CONNECTED

Meet hikers and trail maintainers from around the state. Never hike alone again!

GET INVOLVED

Attend the Buckeye Trail Association business meeting. Learn how you can help.

Registration Opens February 1st
BuckeyeTrailFest.org

The Buckeye TrailFest is sponsored by The Buckeye Trail Association, www.BuckeyeTrail.org



*More photos by
Gary Wildey.*

You can see articles and several other beautiful photographs of the Buckeye Trail on his site:

creepingalongtheblueblazes.com



Biodiversity on the Buckeye Trail: Christmas Tree, OH~

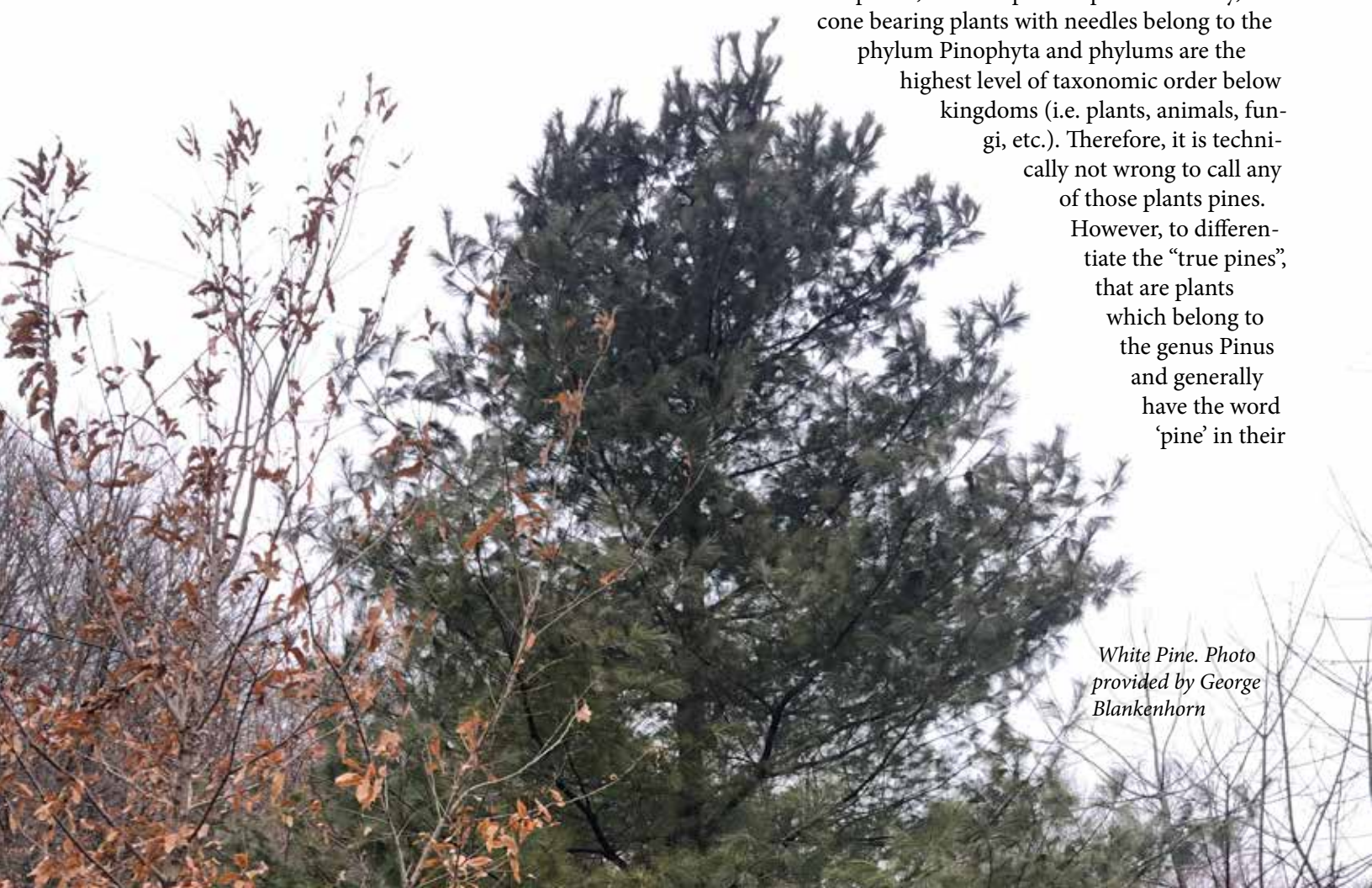
By: *Ryan Kelpy Brown*

Winter has settled in on the Buckeye Trail and the time of nature's dormancy is upon us. Gone are the fiery hues of autumn and here are the gray days of winter. Don't get me wrong, winter can be a beautiful season with ice and snow glistening in the sun. The days are never colder or gloomier, however, than when cast on a backdrop of the barren skeleton of a winter forest. Most of our trees are in their winter slumber, storing up energy and nutrients for their awakening in the springtime. These types of trees are known as deciduous or broadleaf trees, meaning they lose their leaves in the fall. Their diversity and output of seeds and nuts make deciduous forests some of the most productive in the world. In the winter

when they enter their dormancy period, their evergreen counterparts get their chance to shine. These trees can be a welcome sight in a bleak winter world. Their evergreen foliage reminding us that life continues in the forest even on the coldest and gloomiest of days. It was this perpetual viridescence that made them the choice trees to bring inside our homes and decorate during the holiday season.

Christmas trees are called by many names: evergreens, firs, spruces and, most often, pines. So what is the correct name for these trees we all know so well? Are evergreens the same thing as pines? Are all pines evergreens? You might hear someone say "that's not a pine, that's a spruce", but is a spruce a pine? In reality, all cone bearing plants with needles belong to the phylum Pinophyta and phylums are the highest level of taxonomic order below kingdoms (i.e. plants, animals, fungi, etc.). Therefore, it is technically not wrong to call any of those plants pines.

However, to differentiate the "true pines", that are plants which belong to the genus *Pinus* and generally have the word 'pine' in their



White Pine. Photo provided by George Blankenhorn

Christmas TREES!

name, most people refer to the group collectively as conifers. The word conifer means 'cone-bearing' and all conifers produce cones. True pines, spruces, firs, hemlocks and larches are all distinct types of conifers that belong to the Pine Family (*Pinaceae*), one of seven conifer families. An Evergreen on the other hand, is simply any species of plant that does not lose its leaves in the wintertime. We have several species of native evergreens in Ohio that are not conifers, such as the American holly (*Ilex opaca*) and the great rhododendron (*Rhododendron maximum*). At the same time, there are species of conifers that are not evergreens and actually shed their needles in the fall! Some of these deciduous conifers can also be found in Ohio including the tamarack or eastern larch (*Larix laricina*) and bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*).

While broadleaf deciduous forests certainly dominate the Ohio ecosystem, intermixed conifers can be found in nearly all forest types across the state. Contrary to common belief, there are several species of conifers native to Ohio that create biodiversity, habitat, and, of course, that perpetual viridis glow that we all appreciate so much. One of our best-known and mostly widely recognized conifers is the eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*). While this species is native to northeast Ohio, we are on the southern edge of its native range, naturally occurring primarily in New England and in the upper Great Lakes states, as well as in the higher elevations of the Appalachians. In the right conditions white pine can grow to be extremely tall with individuals recorded over 200 feet. In the American colonies the British Navy used giant white pines to make the masts of their ships. This true pine is one of our pine species whose range and abundance has been greatly increased by human activity. Henry David Thoreau once proclaimed "there is no finer tree" and in the first half of the 20th century, America seemed to agree. Scores of white pines were planted all across the eastern US during this time for the purpose of reforestation and land restoration. It was valued for its



Hemlock tree. Photo provided by George Blankenhorn

reputation as a fast-growing, high-value lumber tree that was easy to grow and established well on reclaimed mine lands. This legacy can still be seen across Ohio forests today, with many densely planted stands still in existence. White pine is easily identified by its soft needles arranged in groups of 5 and whorled growth formation, characteristics of no other Ohio pine. White pine is also one of our few native pine species that is sometimes farmed for use as Christmas trees.

Our most common, naturally occurring and widespread conifer however, is not a true pine and is not in the pine family. In fact, its most common given name is also a misnomer, as this species is not closely related to true “Cedars” either. The eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) could more accurately be called the red juniper. It is closely related to the low-lying shrub the common juniper, and is found throughout eastern and central North America. Junipers are in the Cypress, rather than the Pine Family, along with arborvitae, bald cypress, and the giant redwoods and sequoias of the west coast. Junipers are perhaps most famous for their berry-like cones that are the primary ingredient in the flavoring of gin. In Ohio, eastern red cedars are particularly abundant in the Southwest part of the state where they thrive in shallow soils above limestone bedrock. Often times, cedars are the first trees to grow in abandoned agricultural fields and, when the conditions are right, can form stands of mature trees known as cedar glades. Mature cedar forests are a rarity in Ohio because their beautiful aromatic wood is valuable for woodworking and in they are eventually out-competed by taller deciduous trees in areas with rich soil. Cedars have dense foliage and young trees are excellent nesting and roosting habitat for many songbirds. Small mammals will also take refuge under their dense, prickly branches. As they mature, cedars become valuable roosting habitat for creatures like wild turkeys and owls. You can identify eastern red cedars by their prickly scale-like needles, blue berry-like cones, and their narrow growth formation that is sometimes described as being “torpedo” shaped.

One of our most treasured conifer species is less common here, and is more particular about where it likes to grow. It is a relic of the last Ice Age, when a time of receding glaciers created the conditions for it to be widespread across the state. However, as temperatures rose and oaks, hickories, and maples moved in, this species retreated to the deep valleys and gorges where cool, moist conditions still allow it to thrive. If you have ever walked the Grandma Gatewood Trail through Hocking Hills State Park, taken the BT into the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, or kept going around the state to John Bryan State Park, then you have walked in a scenic forest below the



Cedar.
Photo provided by George Blankenhorn



canopy of the mighty eastern hemlock. Eastern hemlocks (*Tsuga canadensis*) were once one of the giants of east. It was in the burned-out trunk of a standing hemlock where Sam Gribley made his home in the classic novel, *My Side of the Mountain*. The largest of these trees can grow to over 150 feet tall nearly 6 feet in trunk diameter. Despite the tree's large size, hemlock twigs are thin and delicate with opposite pairs of short single needles that run perpendicular to the twig. On the underside of each individual needle are 2 parallel white lines that run longways the entire length of the needle. Couple this with deeply furrowed reddish bark and the hemlock can be mistaken for no other tree. Like most trees from our original forests, our largest hemlocks were logged during the time of European settlement. Most of the hemlock trees we see today are less than 100 years old and nowhere near the massive size of their parents. There were giants that remained high in the Appalachians until recently, however, in the 20th century a parasitic bug called the hemlock wooly adelgid (HWA) invaded North America. It has since devastated the hemlock population all across the eastern US, causing most of the remaining giants to perish. It is extremely important that we keep HWA out of our pockets of hemlock forest in Ohio. Infestations can be treated if they are caught in time. Look out for what looks like white tufts of cotton surrounding the needles on the ends of hemlock twigs and report infections to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

Other species of native Ohio conifers include Virginia Pine (*Pinus virginiana*), shortleaf pine (*Pinus echinata*), pitch pine (*Pinus rigida*), Canada yew (*Taxus canadensis*), common juniper (*Juniperus communis*), and arborvitae or northern white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*). Some commonly planted non-native conifers include Norway spruce (*Picea abies*), blue spruce (*Picea pungens*), and Austrian pine (*Pinus nigra*). This winter I hope you gain a new appreciation for conifers and the beauty and value they bring to the winter landscape. After filling up on Christmas ham and cherishing time with family and friends in the ambiance of your own Christmas tree, get out on the Buckeye Trail and admire some of the beautiful wild conifers all across Ohio.

Buckeye Trail Association

P.O. Box 5
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