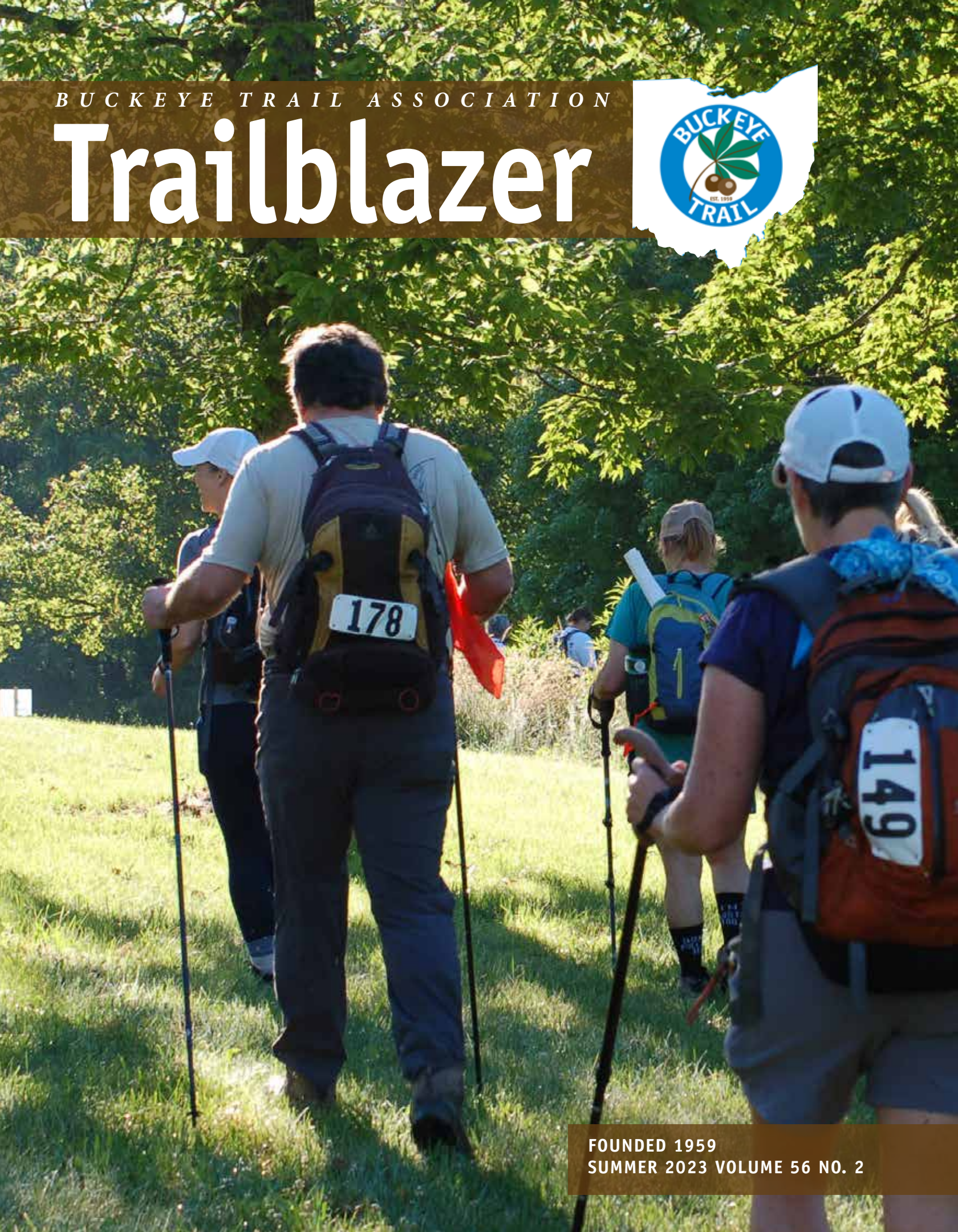


BUCKEYE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Trailblazer



FOUNDED 1959
SUMMER 2023 VOLUME 56 NO. 2

IN THIS ISSUE...

- 3 BTA Receives Forest Chamion Award
- 4 President's Message
- 5 On the Trail
- 6 TrailFest ad
- 7 BTA Fund Report
- 8 Just an Idea to Reality
- 9 50+5 Challenge
- 10 MoreFest 2023 a Blast!
- 12 A Short, But Entertaining History of the BT Paper Maps
- 15 A Fascinating Hobby: Prospecting for Gold in Ohio
- 17 Tag & Tor Comic
- 18 2023 List of Hikes and Events
- 20 New Member Form



Trailblazer

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Disclaimer: The articles and all information in this publication have been prepared with utmost care. However, neither the Buckeye Trail Association nor the Editor can guarantee accuracy or completeness of information. Opinions expressed in the articles, columns and paid advertising are not necessarily those of the BTA.

Editor's Note

Greetings Trailblazer readers and Buckeye Trail lovers!

The Biggest Day Hike has passed, and many people took to the trails. If you haven't already and you'd like to share photos or stories from your Biggest Day Hike this year, feel free to email them to trailblazer@buckeyetrail.org to possibly be featured in the next issue of the Trailblazer. Thank you for hiking the Buckeye Trail. Here's to a great summer and plenty more adventures!

~Jean Vandervaart, Trailblazer Editor & Designer

We would like to make a correction on an error made in the Spring 2023 issue of the Trailblazer. On page 6 under "Trail Preservation" in the BTA Funds Report, there is a spelling error for one of the donors name; "Andrew Lowman" should be "Andrea Lowman." We apologize for the error and any confusion or inconvenience it caused. Thank you Andrea Lowman for contributing to the Trail Preservation Fund.

50+5 Challenge completionist!



"All hiking on the BT occurred in the Scioto Trail, Sinking Spring, and Shawnee sections. Trail maintenance occurred in the Scioto Trail section - mainly Tar Hollow SP/SF. My overall experience has been wonderful. Beautiful experiences on the BT - seeing the views, meeting people, and volunteering trail maintenance. I plan to get more involved! Looking forward to Buckeye Trailfest this year (2023)! ~ **Michael Lafreniere**
[For more info on the 50+5 Challenge, go to page 9.](#)

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@buckeyetrailassociation



@hikethebt

Want to share your photographs and stories of the Buckeye Trail?

Send them to trailblazer@buckeyetrail.org!

They might just show up on our social media or feature in the Trailblazer.

Cover photo: EGGS hikers leaving basecamp
Photo credit: Jean Vandervaart

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Buckeye Trail Association Receives Forest Champion Award

Molly Jo Stanley

The mission of the Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) is to secure healthy air, land, and water for all who call Ohio home. The OEC works for pragmatic solutions to keep Ohio clean and beautiful, and our communities safe. The OEC fights for clean air and water, clean energy, and protected public lands. Knowing that we cannot have a healthy environment without a healthy democracy, the OEC fights for a fair, equitable democratic system. Through legal battles, the OEC fights to hold polluters accountable while working with communities and companies that want to invest in a clean, more sustainable direction. For more than 50 years, the Ohio Environmental Council has led many of the major environmental policy wins in the state, and is Ohio's most comprehensive, effective and respected environmental advocate for a healthier, more sustainable home state. The OEC's success depends upon a strong, robust, inclusive network of organizations, community members, and elected officials across the state. They aim to uplift, support, and enhance the efforts of partners working at the regional, local level to ensure all voices are heard.

The annual Ohio Environmental Council's Green Gala provides the opportunity for environmental champions around the state to come together, build our path ahead, and celebrate the accomplishments that bring us hope and inspiration. At their 2023 Green Gala, the Ohio Environmental Council recognized the Buckeye Trail Association with the Forest Champion Award, celebrating an organization that epitomizes the strength of connectivity: connectivity to our communities, to each other, and to Ohio's vast and wondrous ecosystems. Andrew Bashaw accepted the award on behalf of the BTA. "The BTA is honored to receive recognition for our work to create access to generations of Ohioans to our natural and historical treasures. Creating the opportunity to go, and see care, and be inspired to act as stewards of the trail and the lands the Buckeye Trail passes through."

In their dedication, Southeast Ohio Director Molly Jo Stanley uplifted how the BTA's incredible network of volunteers and stewards continue to put Ohio's forests, watersheds, and villages on the map as national treasures, and their instrumental leadership in the preservation and revitalization of the natural and cultural heritage of Trail Towns like the Village of Shawnee. Molly Jo has had the privilege to work with the Buckeye Trail's Little Cities of the Forest Chapter to support the annual Blue Blaze Festival, a growing trail run; hiking and backpacking trip; and community festival raising funds for this portion of the trail and bringing folks together in beautiful Shawnee, Ohio to celebrate, support, and advocate for this treasure that connects us all in so many powerful ways.

After the Gala, OEC's VP of Public Affairs, Emily Bacha noted the impact of Andrew Bashaw's closing statement in his acceptance speech; if you want to help the BTA, the best thing you can do is find your nearest Buckeye Trail; Emily proceeded to locate and hike a portion of the Trail in Cuyahoga Valley National Park near her hometown for the very first time.



Photo courtesy of Ohio Environmental Council. Pictured left to right: Linda Paul, Andrew Bashaw, Molly Jo Stanley.

President's Message

Steve Walker

I hope that you all had a great Spring 2023. By the time that you read this, Summer 2023 will have begun. Lots of outdoor Buckeye Trail Association (BTA) events have already happened. As I'm writing this on the Monday following our 2023 Buckeye Trail's Biggest Day Hike, it's surprising how much has happened already this year. It began with the Blue Blaze Academy in late April and was followed by the most successful MoreFest in early May and culminating with our largest outdoor statewide event on the first Saturday in June.

The trail maintenance work parties and outdoor celebrations display the heart and soul of our organization, but other efforts that are not outside can also further the mission of the Buckeye Trail Association. Since April 19th of 2016, the BTA has maintained a growing presence in the legislative field. On that day, BTA members (see picture) met with seven Ohio General Assembly legislators and planted the seed for the Ohio Legislative Trails Caucus. Within a month, the other members of the Ohio Trails Partnership had jumped on the bandwagon with the BTA and began advocating for Ohio's non-motorized trails.

With encouragement from the Ohio Trails Partnership (OTP), fourteen legislators decided to form the Ohio Legislative Trails Caucus at the invitation of State Senator, Sean O'Brien, at the beginning of 2017. Over the years, it has grown and currently encompasses about one-third of the 135th Ohio General Assembly. Last year, the Ohio Trails Partnership worked with the Trails Caucus to secure funding toward seven trail projects in the 2023-2024 State of Ohio Capital Budget.

For the 2024-25 State of Ohio Operational Budget, the Ohio Trails Partnership is looking for funding and implementation of an economic impact study on the benefits of non-motorized trails in Ohio. On March 29th of this year, nine BTA volunteers were part of the Ohio Trails Partnership's 2023 Legislative Day and met with State Legislators to advocate for that economic impact study.

Throughout this time, the OTP and the BTA have strengthened their relationship with the Executive Branch of Ohio government. With support from the OTP and the BTA, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Division of Parks and Watercraft undertook the Ohio Trails Vision which was publically unveiled at Buckeye TrailFest 2019. Another result of our effort to grow our relationship with ODNR has been the designation of the Buckeye Trail as a State Recreational Trail.

One of Governor Mike Dewine's initiatives that came about from funding from the American Rescue Plan Act was the Appalachian Community Grant Program. This program is meant to fund infrastructure projects in Appalachian Ohio to the tune of \$500M. Several Buckeye Trail construction projects are being proposed for this program that, if funded, will be completed by 2026. Some of these proposals will be for gap funding for Capital Budget Local Community Projects that were not fully funded. At least two of the other proposed projects will be seeking funding for BTA buildings.

The Buckeye Trail Association has also been busy on the national political front. With its final act last December, the 117th U.S. Congress passed a Feasibility Study Act for the Buckeye National Scenic Trail that will begin after October 1st of this year. With luck on our side, we'll be advocating for a Buckeye National Scenic Trail Designation Act in a few years.

Going forward, the BTA is looking to mobilize its members using technology, modern communications and face-to-face contact to advocate on behalf of the Buckeye Trail and the BTA. What began on April 19, 2016 with four BTA volunteers visiting Ohio's Capitol Square has grown into a permanent endeavor. Have a great Summer and I hope to see you on the Buckeye Trail.

Steve Walker
president@buckeyetrail.org



Pictured left to right: Robert Brown, Ruth Brown, Steve Walker and Andrew Bashaw. Photo courtesy of Steve Walker.

On the Trail...

Sometimes it is hard to keep up with the momentum of the idea of the Buckeye Trail (BT). The great turnout at our events so far this year - such as the several winter hikes, Blue Blaze Academy, MoreFest, and Chapter trail work parties - has been encouraging as we head into even more work parties this year, and our upcoming events: the Emma 'Grandma' Gatewood Solstice (E.G.G.S.) Hike, Buckeye Trail's Biggest Day Hike, Buckeye TrailFest, Little Loop Challenge, Blue Blaze Festival, other trail runs, and more. We opened, or re-established, our trail route through Hocking State Forest, Little Rocky and Sheick Hollow State Nature Preserves. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) has repaired our bridge over Duck Creek at Lake Logan State Park removing a BT closure. Our volunteer Trail Management Team worked hard to evolve and now has representation from each of our now ten local BTA Chapters. New BT design, flagging, and permitting is occurring at a feverish pace that I have not seen in my time with the BTA. From Buckeye Trail Town designations of Spring Valley to outreach events on the Ohio Statehouse lawn, to working with the Ohio Trails Partnership to testify to the Ohio Senate in support of ODNR's future budget, it is hard to keep up with the level of activity of our volunteers, staff, and partners all inspired by that idea of a Buckeye Trail.

There is, of course, a lot of work behind the scenes to support the creation and improvement of the BT experience for all to enjoy. I don't think we give ourselves enough time to slow down for a moment to celebrate our combined achievements, the hard work of individuals, and the teamwork of people around Ohio. We don't take enough time to stop and enjoy the experience of the natural world, historic treasures, and communities that we get to be a part of creating for everyone else.

That is one reason why we have a Buckeye TrailFest (August 17-20 at Shawnee State Park Lodge): to stop for a moment and celebrate all things Buckeye Trail. Last year we appreciated all that the Cuyahoga Valley has to offer, and this year we're headed south to the 'Little Smokies' of Shawnee State Park, State Forest, and the Nature Conservancy's Edge of Appalachia Preserve. We're introducing the fledgling Appalachian Foothills Chapter to the rest of the Buckeye Trail Association community. We'll be learning from local experts about the ecology and history of the region as we sample the best of all the outdoor recreation opportunities we can. We'll be honoring key volunteers and partners for their hard work, reporting the current state of the BT and BTA to the membership, and electing Trustees to the BTA Board. Just as important, we'll be hanging out at the campfire under the stars, hiking together on the trail, sharing meals, getting to know each other better, and learning what volunteers, staff, and partners are working on to improve the BT. We'll be sharing tall tales from the BT, inspired by what we've accomplished since 1959 and where we are chipping in together to take the BT forward.

I hope you'll join me at Buckeye TrailFest this year close to the southernmost point of the BT in Ohio largest expanse of contiguous forest, highlighting the best of Adams and Scioto Counties. Come down to slow down, take a hike, learn about the BTA and another wonderful region that the BT leads us through, pull up a camp chair around the fire and enjoy the moment. Until then, I hope you find a spot on the BT near you to stop and appreciate what you are helping to create and improve for all to enjoy. Thank you for your support, and ... Thank you for Hiking!

Andrew Bashaw
Executive Director
Buckeye Trail Association

JOIN US
for the 10th Annual

BUCKEYE TRAIL FEST

**A WEEKEND OF HIKING, LEARNING,
AND FUN FOR EVERYONE**

SHAWNEE STATE PARK
Shawnee State Park Lodge, Portsmouth, OH
August 17-20, 2023

For more information and to register, go to:
www.buckeyetrail.org/TrailFest/

10th Annual BUCKEYE TRAILFEST

in Shawnee State Park



AUGUST 17-20, 2023 | Shawnee State Park Lodge
4404B OH-125, West Portsmouth, OH 45663

The Buckeye TrailFest offers a long weekend packed full of hikes, workshops, presentations, speakers, and social opportunities. Come for the whole weekend or come for the day. There is something for everyone.

Hikes cover all skill levels - easy, moderate, difficult. Meet other hikers and trail maintainers from around the state and learn about nature, history, survival skills, trailbuilding tips, and more!

Event Organizers and Partners:



The Appalachian Foothills Chapter is excited to host the 2023 Buckeye TrailFest. Welcome to Appalachian Ohio, rich in biodiversity and unique habitats. Whether you are local or travelled hours to get here, we hope you have a great time!



BTA Funds Report

Your contribution to any BTA fund is tax deductible. All contributions of \$20 or more are acknowledged. Thank you to all of our donors who have gone above and beyond to support the mission of the BTA during these challenging times! We appreciate you.

FEBRUARY 2, 2022 TO MAY 1, 2023

GENERAL FUND

Mrs. Eleanor Anderson (In memory of David McCahon)	the BT: Bill Hines, Meg Sondey, and Raman Ras) Jeri Getts	Ronald C. Peterson Mr. David Poole
Andrew & Claudia Bashaw	Ms. Jennifer Haag (In celebration of the marriage between Diane Wright & Howard Ammons, avid lovers of the BT)	Ms. Cassandra Pritchett
Kevin & Mary Jo Bowman	Patrick & Mary Hayes (In memory of Bob Pond, Scott Cottrell, and Catherine Robbins)	Mrs. Georgeann Rapien
Joseph Brown (In memory of James H. Brown)	Gerard Hilferty & Jackie Fokes	James Michael Saxton
Don Byrnett	John & Marsha Hudson	Mark & Betty Schwab
Chris Carmichael	Chris & Stephen Kitsoulis	Frederick Silver
Christine Coblentz	Michael Kohr	Heather Stehle
Downtown Mantua Revitalization Corp	Andrea Lowman	S Sykora Stilwell (In memory of Joseph D. Sykora)
John Fetzer	John Malloy (In memory of David McCahon)	Maureen Stutler
Nancy Flogge	Dennis McCurdy	Ethan Tabor
Thomas E. Friedman	Joyce & Andrew Morton	Dale K. Vest
Robert A. Fritschie		
Bob & Lynn Garbo		
Jan Geho (In recognition for their completion of		

TRAIL PRESERVATION

Jim Gilkey (In memory of Garry Dill)

TRAIL MANAGEMENT

Mel Beers (Remembering Bob Pond for Trail Maintenance)

CROOKED RIVER CHAPTER OF THE BTA

Edward & Cheryl Sliva

THE WILDERNESS CHAPTER OF THE BTA

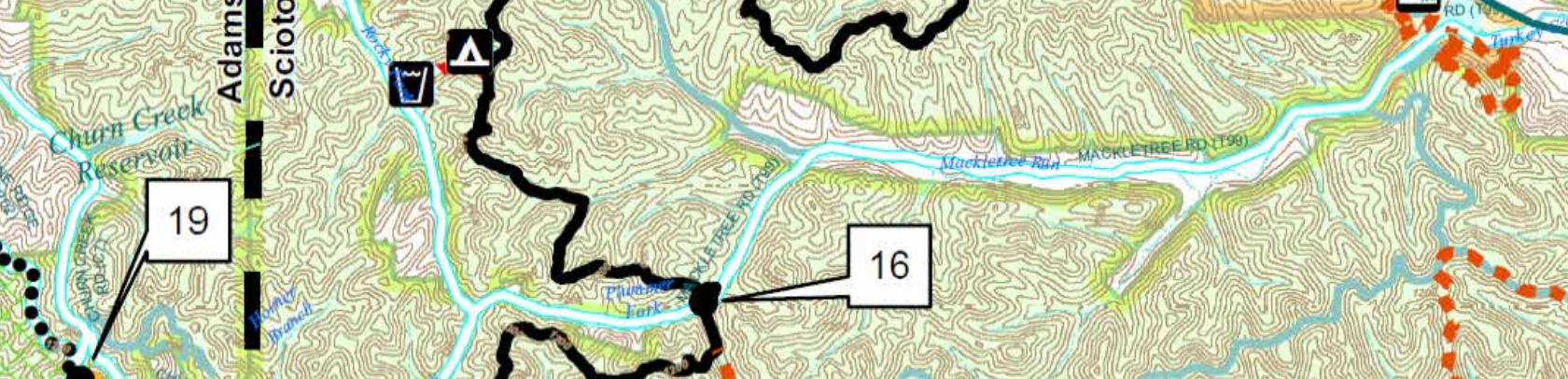
Matthew Edmonds

Want to see your business or event advertised in the next Trailblazer?

Ad space is available in each issue of the Trailblazer magazine and is sent to people throughout the state of Ohio!

Ad size	For one issue	For FOUR issues
1/8 page (3.75" x 2.5")	\$30.00	\$90.00
1/4 page (3.75" x 5")	\$60.00	\$180.00
1/2 page (7.5" x 5")	\$120.00	\$360.00
Full page (7.5" x 10")	\$240.00	\$720.00

Submitted advertisements must be at a resolution of 300 dpi or greater. The BTA can provide some minimal graphic assistance for an additional moderate fee (email trailblazer@buckeyetrail.org for more details). The BTA reserves the right to decline ads that may conflict with our mission.



'Just an Idea' to Reality

Andrew Bashaw, Executive Director

Out on the Buckeye Trail today someone may be feeling a cool breeze on a hot hike under the shade of the forest canopy. Someone might have their toes in the sand and rocks at the edge of Lake Erie looking toward the Canadian shore somewhere far beyond the horizon and the Fairport Harbor West Breakwater Lighthouse. And someone might be gazing across the Ohio River Valley to the distant hills of Kentucky from the Ohio River Monument at Eden Park.

What was once 'Just an Idea,' just a line on a map connecting Lake Erie to the Ohio River in a newspaper article in 1958, is very real today thanks to generations of people like you who have supported the work of Buckeye Trail Association volunteers, staff, and partners. We need your continued support today.

Somewhere out there on the BT today, you could even smell how real the idea has become; a BTA volunteer with a Pulaski is digging the trail into the side of a hill, enjoying that new trail smell of turned earth, pruned spicebush, sawn oak log and cut roots of sassafras.

The *idea* of a Buckeye Trail is so great that it continues to inspire new generations of hikers, supporters, and volunteers who all help it grow into its potential. Thanks to that *idea*, in 1958, the BT is here, now, whenever people need the experience most. Discovery and enjoyment of the BT has grown exponentially in the last few years. And, thanks to the work of BTA volunteers and staff that the BT community has supported, we have leveraged another growth spurt for the BT. From State Trail designation to



a National Scenic Trail feasibility study approved by the US Congress to miles and miles of new BT development being permitted, the *idea* becomes even more real for hikers, their friends and families every day.

Step by step, someone is walking toward a sunset over the farm fields of northern Ohio, or a sunrise over the rapids of the Maumee River from the Miami & Erie Canal Towpath, or hiking through the dappled sunlight in a rocky hemlock forest, or backpacking into Buckeye TrailFest over the ridges of the 'Little Smokies.' Support from the BT community is helping to extend that solid line on our maps every step toward the next horizon. Together, we're creating even more great BT experiences for the next generation to enjoy and steward.

It's hard to take a kid down the trail to look under rocks and discover what creatures live there without enjoying a moment full of wonder and become a kid again yourself. That is what we have created together, from *just an idea*, all around Ohio; a place to go, and see, to wonder, and to be inspired to care enough to be good stewards of the trail itself and the places it passes through.

Last year, BTA memberships made up about 13% of our total income, while 26% of our budget came from individual donations. Your support today is important to BTA's daily work to follow through on our recent successes, and our support of volunteers, trailing, tools, and time. Supporters help make our *great idea* a reality.

Please join us in supporting our important work today - our volunteers, staff, and partners who are taking care of the Buckeye Trail we have to hike today and our combined work to extend that Buckeye Trail line on the map to the next horizon. Together we're creating a line of great experiences all around the state for everyone to enjoy.



5+5 BUCKEYE TRAIL VOLUNTEER Challenge



In 2018, The 50+5 Challenge was created in celebration of the Ohio Legislature's Year of the Trails and the 50th Anniversary of the National Trails System Act. Then in 2019, for the 60th Anniversary of the Buckeye Trail and Buckeye Trail Association, we again invited Ohioans to challenge themselves to hike 50 miles on Ohio's 1,400+ mile BT and give back five volunteer hours to the trail we love. Now, we are bringing back the challenge to encourage Ohioans to go and enjoy the trail. Those who complete the hiking challenge and register their volunteer hours will receive a congratulatory packet including a certificate of completion, a 50 mile hiking patch, and a Buckeye Trail Association 5 hour volunteer patch to commemorate their accomplishment.

Once you have finished 50 miles and 5 volunteer hours, go to buckeyetrail.org/50-5-challenge.php to register the hours.

If you take any photographs during your 50 miles or 5 volunteer hours that you'd like to share with the Buckeye Trail community, you can send your files to trailblazer@buckeyetrail.org! Photo submissions should be at least 1,080 px wide regardless of layout (square, landscape, portrait) with at least a resolution of 72 ppi to a maximum of 200 ppi. Photos should be clear and not blurry or over- or underexposed.

Hike 50 Miles

Looking for some opportunities to log some miles on the Buckeye Trail? With over 1,400 miles of trail, dozens of organized hiking events, group day hikes and backpacking trips, or your solo BT hike, adventure is waiting all around the state! You could use the 50+5 Challenge to explore new places around Ohio on the BT and make all 50 miles unique. Or you can hike the same five miles ten times if you want. Hiking five miles out and five miles back counts as ten. You choose your adventure!

Join us at Events

Check out our events and group hikes coming up this year to help you complete your 50 miles. You can find a schedule of events on pages 17-19 or on buckeyetrail.org/events.php.

Get Involved with Your Local Chapter

Our BTA Chapters organize and promote all types of hikes year round at

our meetup sites. Visit [meetup.com/pro/buckeyetrail/](https://www.meetup.com/pro/buckeyetrail/) to view those activities. This is a great way to get more involved with BTA Chapters and log more miles on the trail.

Volunteer 5 Hours

Join Buckeye Trail Work Parties

Join any of the BTA's Chapter Work Parties. This is a great way to meet other outdoor enthusiasts, learn about building and maintaining the trail we all love, and make new friends. The schedule for these events can be found on pages 17-19. Come for a day, a weekend, or join us for the whole week if you want!

Work with a Buckeye Trail Adopter

Trail Adopters are volunteers who maintain one or more stretches of the Buckeye Trail. Contact volunteer@buckeyetrail.org to find out if there is an Adopter in your area who could use a hand with a project or some help maintaining their stretch of trail.

Organize Events and Public Outreach

The BTA hosts many events throughout the year and our volunteers man BTA information booths at festivals, county fairs, and other events around the state. These types of opportunities can be found on the Events page of the BTA's website, and on your local Chapter's Meetup.com page. Events need planning and organizing, which requires several volunteers before, during and after events. Chapters are often the ones organizing information booths around the state.

Volunteer for a BTA Chapter

The BTA has 10 Chapters around Ohio and they can use volunteer help all year round for their own volunteer and outreach events, as well as Chapter leadership. To find a Chapter local to you, check out our Chapters' web page* for descriptions. Visit our Meetup.com page for the events that the Chapters have scheduled around the BT.

For general questions about volunteering, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator at volunteer@buckeyetrail.org

For all other questions, contact us at info@buckeyetrail.org

MorelFest 2023 a Blast!

Valerie Gardner



Photo credit: Steve Walker

The Buckeye Trail Association's (BTA) MorelFest is the Muskingum Lake Chapter's signature event held every spring at the BTA Beall Farmstead and Century Barn in Deersville, OH. The event celebrates the morel mushroom (*Morchella*), a prized delicacy that grows in Ohio's forests and woodlands. The unique and exciting event brings together mushroom hunters, outdoor enthusiasts, and nature lovers from all over Ohio and neighboring states.

The event is open to all ages and skill levels, and there is something for everyone to enjoy. MorelFest is a weekend-long event that features a variety of activities and attractions: guided and solo foraging hikes, live music, spirited campfires, and a potluck everyone is welcome to join. Campers can also access Tappan Lake at the BTA Beall Farmstead and enjoy leisurely fishing and launch kayaks for paddling excursions. Many registrants arrive on Friday evenings to set up camp at the farmstead. A few guests got lucky this year and found morels on self-guided hikes around the barn. Those not ready to turn in early watched the full moon rise and spent the evening around the campfire, sharing stories and mushroom recipes.

Saturday, before the hunts began, attendees enjoyed a delicious breakfast spread, courtesy of Deersville General Store, which included biscuits n' gravy and breakfast casserole. Everyone, including the trail dogs, gathered in front of the BTA barn for a group photo before splitting into their guided hiking groups.

Guided hikes are the backbone of MorelFest. Morels can be hard to spot; even a trained eye can miss them easily. Seasoned mushroom hunters familiar with the terrain lead the hikes and help educate attendees on how to find morels and identify mushrooms found along the way. The goal of MorelFest is not only to find morels but also to educate attendees on how to find morels on their own. One successful hiking group hit it big and found 300 morels on their hunt! For many participants, this was the first time they found these elusive mushrooms. Most groups returned to camp with morels, and some even brought back other foraged edibles, like ramps (*Allium tricoccum*), pheasant back mushrooms (*Polyporus squamosus*), and wild onions (*Allium canadense*). The volunteer hike leaders all earned their 5-hour patch and are well on their way to achieving the 50 miles required to complete the Buckeye Trail 50+5 Challenge.

After a long day on the trails, several groups stopped by Deersville General Store to enjoy Buckeye Krunch, the Buckeye Trail's official ice cream (vanilla ice cream with peanut butter cups, crispy rice, and blue sprinkles). Still, some didn't want to give up the hunt and decided to go off independently in search of morels. Saturday evening went off without a hitch and began with the potluck dinner, a tradition at MorelFest. The hot and sour mushroom soup, which included foraged morels and wood ears (*Auricularia auricula-judae*) was a huge hit, and a second pot had to be stewed. Another MorelFest tradition is live music. This year, the Tuscarawas River Band made their 5th appearance at MorelFest and played two sets with an encore in response to extended applause and cheers from the crowd.

MorelFest cofounder, Justin Stutz, commented, "What started out small seven years ago has now turned into something amazing. With what started with unfamiliar faces to becoming friends that share the same passion of hunting morel mushrooms!" MorelFest is a great way to connect with like-minded individuals who share a passion for the outdoors and the natural world. Attendees can meet new people, make new friends, and share their experiences and knowledge about hiking, camping, and other outdoor activities.

In addition to celebrating the morel, the event is a significant BTA fundraiser. The funds raised from MorelFest directly help to ensure that the trail remains accessible and well-maintained for future generations to enjoy. In contrast to other mushroom foraging events, participants only pay a registration fee, which goes directly to the BTA. However, thanks to generous gifts from a few attendees, an impromptu auction occurred between the band's sets, and an additional \$260 in donations was raised.

Growing in popularity every year, BTA's MorelFest sold out for the first time this year,



Morels cooking over a fire.
Photo credit: Nick Govelovich

and registration had to close almost three weeks earlier than planned. The farmstead was also opened to the public on Saturday evening to watch the Tuscarawas River Band perform. MorelFest founder and host, Brandon Bates, estimated that 175 people attended this year's event. He also added he was happily surprised to see so many families and children at this year's event. Several children had their faces painted and played with sparklers and glowsticks later in the evening when the band performed.

Planning is already in the works for Morelfest 2024! The dates are confirmed, May 3rd – 5th, 2024, and the Tuscarawas River Band accepted the invite to play again. A paddle and morel hike option will also be available for participants to sign up for. There are also two new mushroom events being held at the BTA Beall Farmstead and Century Barn this year: Summer Mushroom Camp on July 21st – 23rd and Fall Mushroom Camp on September 22nd – 24th. Whether you are an experienced mushroom hunter or just starting, BTA mushroom hunting events are great opportunities to learn about morel mushrooms, enjoy the outdoors, and meet others who share your passion for mushrooms!



Nick Govelovich



Brandon Bates



“What started out small seven years ago has now turned into something amazing. With what started with unfamiliar faces to becoming friends that share the same passion of hunting morel mushrooms!” - Justin Stutz



Brandon Bates



Nick Govelovich

A Short But Entertaining History of the Buckeye Trail Paper Maps

Karen “Tagalong” Power

Jeri “Tortuga” Getts and I stopped at an intersection in the Stockport Section to take a break and get our bearings. As I read the notes section in the Stockport Section map aloud to Tor, I started to chuckle and then laugh. We both laughed.

ROAD SIGNS WITHIN MORGAN COUNTY

Road signs are fairly common within Morgan County. However, certain oddities require comment.

First, the road sign is often placed perpendicular to the direction of the road rather than parallel as in most counties.

Second, cross-roads are signed on both roads. However, state roads are signed by ODOT, not by the county. The result is you may or may not be able to determine what State Route you are crossing unless ODOT happened to locate one of their markers within eye-sight.

Third, where a side-road leaves a through road, the side road is marked. However, the through road is not marked. Apparently, you are expected to turn onto side-roads but not turn off them--a curious thought (Stockport, 2014).

It wasn't the first time that we had come across a description or a comment in the Buckeye Trail (BT) map notes that struck us as funny: “Turn north just past the house with the imposing veranda” or “don't miss the view just a few hundred feet ahead. Go for it! You can do it!” The colorful wording along with the unexpected humor or turn of a phrase buried into trail descriptions and notes caught my attention.

“Who writes these maps?” I wondered aloud.

It didn't take much detective work to find out. Many people work on Buckeye Trail (BT) maps. There's even a Map Committee. However, the credit for the beginnings of the current BT maps goes to three people: Robert (Bob) Paton (1901-1995), aka Mr. Buckeye Trail; Jack Watkins (1924-2019), and Jim Sprague who, at age 93, is alive and kicking (thankfully, in that order). This is a story about the paper maps. But it's mostly about Jim Sprague who, like many of us, fell in love with the BT as a hiker. Jim, like his friends Bob Paton and Jack Watkins, spent hours, days, years dedicated to maintaining, expanding, and promoting the BT.

The story of the paper maps begins with Bob Paton—who used his ability as a small plane pilot to procure maps and his willingness to copy, cut, and paste. With a set of Ohio county maps that he had obtained from a company in Wisconsin, scissors, and glue, Bob began the tedious task of piecing together the BT county by county. Unfortunately for the hiker, the maps were not consistently drawn to scale, and it was difficult to get two county maps to fit together

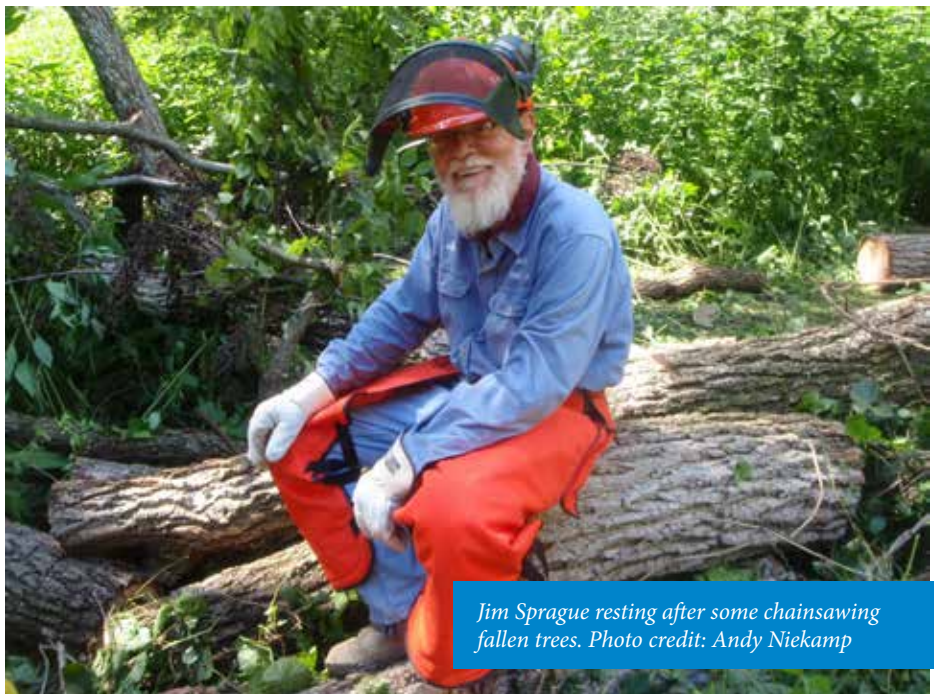
when one map was bigger than the other. Trail accuracy was, at best, coarse. The scale bar was hand drawn with a ruler. Treks off road and/or through wooded areas were represented as straight or diagonal lines, also drawn with a ruler. Landmarks were remarkably out of order. But it was a start.

Jack Watkins and Jim Sprague volunteered for the task of making the maps more hiker friendly. Jack cut-and-pasted Ohio Department of Transportation county maps together, and Jim wrote the explanatory notes. Thanks to Jim's persuasiveness and Jack's willingness to acquiesce to his friend's suggestions, intersections were titled and detailed trail descriptions were added. Jack would later credit the trail descriptions as the “heart and soul” of the BT maps which “set [them] apart from any other trail maps” (p.6, *BTA Trailblazer*, Fall 2010).

The maps are unique and definitely non-traditional. They are a combination of road maps and topographical maps that give the hiker navigational guidance, provide history*, describe landmarks, and indicate physical features and relief contours. Maps note mileage at each intersection whether the hiker is traveling clockwise or counterclockwise. Explanations of the trail lie in the border above, below, or along the side of the map itself. The text is detailed and specific.

Here's an example from the St. Mary's Section Map:

Go W across S Main St on the Linear Trail. Across College St (0.5 mi), ascend to join former RR grade. At next trail junction (0.11 mi), join the Hydraulic Canal Path that will undulate slightly NW to High St (0.22 mi). Continue across High St through wooded area past Franz Pond, across Park



Jim Sprague resting after some chainsawing fallen trees. Photo credit: Andy Niekamp

Ave (0.4 mi), beside hydraulic canal past Echo Lake, above Fountain Park and across Ziegler Rd. (1.1 mi). After crossing modern spillway from Swift Run Lake, bear NE.

The description is a precise personal guide for the hiker. As a BT section hiker, I found the detail and the accuracy over 26 sections and 1,444 miles to be amazingly consistent. Equally amazing to me was the realization that a person actually hiked these miles, step by step just like I was. This person noted every landmark, every turn, every stream crossing, every undulation, every steep descent, every steep ascent, every view, every interesting rock formation, and every notable historical and cultural site. That person was Jim Sprague.

Jim Sprague is a transplant to Ohio from New York who loves the outdoors. A chemist by trade, he thought hiking in Ohio was the dumbest thing he had ever heard of. I understood what he meant. Coming from New York, a state rich in history, miles of lake and ocean coastline, forests, wetlands, breathtaking views and miles of hiking trails in the Adirondacks and the Catskills Mountains, I imagine that the glaciated flatland that characterizes most of Ohio seemed boring. But in the 1980s, he fell in with a group of individuals from the Cleveland Hiking Club who also loved the outdoors. Weekend excursions on the BT on the eastern side of Ohio were regular events. As the group's hiking weekends took them farther and farther south, it didn't take Jim long to realize that calling the BT a "trail" along the east side of Ohio was a loose use of the term "trail." Jim thought something should be done about that.

Under his direction and leadership, the first Buckeye Trail Crew** was born. According to Jim, he thought that "organizing camping [trips] with trail maintenance as the theme might meet with member approval. Almost immediately, it became clear that trail creation would be more exciting. Besides, I loved an excuse to ramble across land I did not know." Jim continued:

Conditions happened to be right on State [Forest] and Park land. Prior to the mid 70's or so [the dates here are estimates], the state had large staffs to perform activities in support of public outdoor recreation. Volunteers were not needed and were not tolerated very well. Subsequent to that time, their staffs were cut drastically. Volunteers were not sought, but if we performed as we claimed we would, we were allowed to try. So I got to ramble all I wanted. I...promoted the idea of redoing some really bad trail or maintaining better trail within various state lands.

Jim learned how to build trail by attending volunteer vacations offered by the American Hiking Society. He also learned what not to do by watching the way volunteer State Trail Crews were managed. "Give volunteers important jobs—just picking



Jim Sprague (left) and Andrew Bashaw (right) smiling for a photo during trail work at TrailFest 2012. Photo credit: Darlene Karoly

up cigarette butts wasn't going to keep volunteers coming back," Jim explained to me. Jim jokes that he used Work Parties as an excuse for camping weekends, but with his skill, determination, leadership, and intuition on working with people, he trained a "top-notch team" that built "exceptional foot trail" (p.304 *Follow the Blue Blazes*, 2nd ed., 2014). Jim is proud of the quality product that his volunteers produced.

Eventually, Jim jumped into the Buckeye Trail Association (BTA) with both feet and served as President from 1987 to 1992. One of his most notable efforts was to extend the Buckeye Trail into southeast Ohio. The Wilderness Loop, which he so named for its "pleasantly undeveloped nature," added about 114 miles to total trail miles. The Wilderness Loop, he reasoned, had more of a backcountry feel and camping was more accessible on both private and public land. Dispersed camping, for example, is permitted in Wayne National Forest (*Editor's note: dispersed camping is camping outside of a designated campground, but still within legal limits*). It was something the BTA thought would appeal to long-distance hikers. The Road Fork Section and Whipple Section maps were first published in 2005. Plus, it was a way to merge additional miles of the North Country Scenic Trail (NCST)***, a trail that traverses eight states and covers 4,800 miles from North Dakota to Vermont, with the Buckeye Trail. Today, the BT shares over 900 miles with the NCST.

**Editor's note: Now called "Buckeye Trail Work Parties"

Jim added:

The reason [for the Wilderness Loop] was to complete more of BTA's commitment to support the NCT [by] maintain[ing] that trail in SE Ohio. It was clear that it was not going to happen unless we did it, at least not in the foreseeable future. The Federals support BTA activities on their lands, in my opinion, because they invented the NCT and can hardly not support much-needed help. I put the present trail connection into Shawnee State Forest to bring more volunteer help to [the] NCT there also.

The Wilderness Loop isn't as popular as the BTA thought it would be. Jim laughs at the nickname the "Stupid Loop" some hikers have deemed it. The story goes that a BT hiker had just completed the entire circuit around the state when she heard the news that the Wilderness Loop was incepted. Feeling more than a little irritated at the news that the BT had been extended by over 100 miles in a fairly remote section of the state, she quipped, "Do I have to do that stupid loop?" The nickname has stuck.

As I listened with delight to Jim's anecdotes, I turned the conversation back to the maps. "How did you go about recording the trail in such detail?" I asked. I pictured him with notebook in hand, jotting notes and laboriously drawing sketches like a Charles Darwin of the wilderness. But, no. Jim said that he relied on his strong sense of distance, a map, a compass, his good memory, topo maps and later Google maps.

I had another question for him that hikers sometimes wonder: "The historical information—why is it sometimes at the beginning, at the end, or right in the middle of the explanatory note?" The answer to that one is simple. Chronology is at play. The monument or presidential library or battlefield or Navy air ship crash is sandwiched in the spot on the trail where these things actually occurred or stand. Jim thought it was important that the information be in the right place so a hiker wouldn't unknowingly hike past and miss seeing something of significance.

My favorite question was about the humor or "Jim Sprague-isms" sprinkled throughout the text. I was delighted with the answer. "The trail can be as dull as the Dickens sometimes. Hiking naturally lends itself to monotony." I tended to agree with him. As a long-distance hiker myself, I know that the constancy of trees and rocks can become tiresome. Jim's goal was to give a tired or bored hiker some comic relief or, in some cases, words of encouragement, or funny commentary. The maps did that for me. Jim's humor was never lost on me or unappreciated. Some of the colorful descriptions have been omitted in the newer maps due to space constraints. However, you'll find some of my favorite "Sprague-isms" from the original copies here.

What part of the Buckeye Trail is Jim's favorite? The western part of Ohio is the least interesting to many with its cornfields and tomato crops. However, Jim is fascinated by the canal system with current-day vestiges that run from the Ohio River to Toledo. He laughs when he says that when the railroads took over as transportation king, "Ohio didn't have the sense to lose the canals in the 1850s like Indiana did." It's true that Ohio lost money on the canals, but the canals served their purpose in promoting agriculture and industry in the state.

Some wonder if electronic maps like FarOut and Avenza will make paper maps of the Buckeye Trail obsolete. The BT paper

Jim Sprague-isms

Just a few...words of warning, encouragement, information, instruction, inspiration:

- ...a knee-busting drop (20%!)... (*Whipple Section Map, 2010*)
- ...a tortuous section of steep ravines. (*Williamsburg Section Map, 2005*)
- An octagonal house with an annex faced with cobble stones... (*Norwalk Section Map, 2010*)
- A whimsically designated "Natural Play Area"... (*Troy Section Map, 2013*)
- A delightful flood plains woods... (*Troy Section Map, 2013*)
- If you have good eyes, you may discern blue blazes on the edge of field... However, you will do well to ignore those blazes, and go W on the ATV trail. (*Defiance Section Map, 2012*)
- Stark Cnty Parks has requested that BTA not paint its familiar, friendly reassurance blazes along OECTT (Ohio and Erie Tow Path Trail). Please do not be alarmed. (*Massilon Section Map, 2009*)
- The good news is that the steep climb ends in 850'. (*Scioto Trail Section Map, 2012*)
- ...begin a winding, gradual descent through tortured terrain. (*Sinking Spring Section Map, 2013*)
- Follow meandering footpath with apparent aimlessness generally W. (*New Straitsville Section Map, 2014*)
- Prepare to meander and undulate vigorously. (*Williamsburg Section Map, 2012*)
- BT passes a decaying octagonal house... (*Stockport Section Map, 2006*)

maps provide the hiker with a rich context and multiple ways to enjoy the trail: through the history, the culture, and the geological formations unique to Ohio—things electronic maps don't provide. One important advantage to a paper map is that if your smart phone dies or you drop your GPS system in the water during a stream crossing, you'll still know where you are and which way to go.

My thanks to Jim Sprague for being a delightful and entertaining interviewee. My thanks also goes to Darlene Karoly and Andy Niekamp for their help with this project.

**Historical information on the maps is highlighted in blue or italicized. Jim credits Bob Pond (1938-2023) as the main contributor to these sections of the maps.*

**** The Wilderness Loop was originally intended to be included in the NCST, but never was in the end.*



Photo courtesy of Jim Sprague

A Fascinating Hobby: Prospecting for **Gold** in Ohio

Victoria Livingston

The Buckeye Trail, West Union Section #24-20, April 22, 2023, 8.7 miles. Hiking the Buckeye Trail (BT) has changed me. In the past, if Dave started chatting with a stranger, I would have rolled my eyes and stood there impatiently. Pacing. Checking the time on my Fitbit. Now, I am more open to what there is to learn from this jaunt around Ohio. Sure, we like to reach new milestones, but I'm more in the moment now. We parked at the bridge near Point 20 in the West Union Section and walked along a road next to the West Fork of Straight Creek. At point 21, the BT went straight on Baker-Hanselman Road. I asked Dave to narrate this story, because it's technical:

Off to the side of the road, a man had parked his SUV with a small, box trailer. He pulled a large garden wagon down the trailer's ramp (*pictured on page 16*). On the wagon, the object looked like a small pontoon boat where you swim around the pool with your margarita.



Joe panning for gold. Photo courtesy of Victoria Livingston



Then, he said, “I’m panning for gold.”

I figured he was going to irrigate somebody’s field, although that didn’t make sense. I wondered what he was up to. The pump equipment would be permanently mounted if he was a legit farmer. Pulling a pump out of his trailer didn’t make sense. To do what? Shortly, he filled in the blanks for me. Because I would never have figured it out in a million years.

The man asked, “Can you guess what this is?”

I said, “I know you’ve got a pump because there’s the suction and there’s the discharge.” The hose was real long (*green tube pictured above*). I knew it was some kind of water pump because I could see the large pickup and discharge hoses that you use to pump large amounts of water out of basements or from one spot to another. I said, “But the problem is that you don’t have any filter on the end of the pickup hose, and it will tear your pump up pretty quickly by picking up pieces of rock unless it’s a diaphragm pump.”

He said, “It’s a jetted pump like you have on a well. So, the rock is not going to hurt it.”

I was still puzzled.

Then, he said, “I’m panning for gold.”

Most of the time, I take people at their word, but this time, I thought: *Yeah, right.*

He said, “There are small pieces of gold that get caught in

the cracks and crevices in the solid bedrock of the streambed.”

I’m still like, *r-i-i-g-h-t*. I said, “There is no gold in Ohio. Gold only comes from quartz deposits.”

He said, “This doesn’t come from Ohio. It came down from Canada with the glacial till.”

I said, “There is no glacial till here. It stopped at Great Seal.” (Pause. Great Seal State Park is located in Southeastern Ohio. The area is referred to as the “Appalachian escarpment.” North and west of the Appalachian Foothills are glaciated plains; south and east of this area are rugged hills. We like hiking at Great Seal State Park because it is more challenging than flatter trails near Columbus. Now, back to Dave’s story).

He introduced himself as Joe and said, “There were three glaciers that came in. Great Seal was the last glacier. The prior glaciers brought the till to the West Union and Cincinnati area. Look at the hills around here. There are rolling hills flattened by glaciers, and they left behind this rock and gravel.” As he hauled his equipment up the road, he said, “You’re not going

to get rich doing this. Can you guess how much this equipment costs? \$11,000.” Then, he chuckled, “My wife tells me not to quit my day job. But my day job is the whole reason I do this. It helps me unwind. I deliver fuel for a living—it’s like a rolling bomb, and I get really stressed when people cut me off.”

I’ve not driven a semi, but I have driven a big truck before, and you can’t stop as fast as a car. It would be very stressful driving a semi, much less driving one that carries 7,500 or more gallons of gasoline. So, then Joe pointed to his blue pan upstream. He started pulling his wagon with his equipment down the road. Then, he walked down to where the pan was. He brought the pan up, and it looked like it had a quarter cup of black sand in it (*pictured on page 15*). I asked, “Is that black sand?”

Joe said, “No, it’s a heavy magnetic material. The pump sucks up the pieces of rock and separates the heaviest pieces from the lighter waste rock in the sluice. This is what’s left.”

So, we’re looking at it, and we can see three tiny yellow pinpricks. I said, “Is that the gold dust?”

He said, “No, those are gold flakes. That one is so big you can pick it up.”

Top left photo: Joe pulling wagon with gold prospecting tools. Photo courtesy of Victoria Livingston.

It was so tiny you could hardly see it, but I really didn't want to insult him.

Joe said, "Other guys have found bigger nuggets in Michigan. A guy I knew who spent \$5,000 to take a trip to Alaska, and he found \$15,000 worth of gold."

I have seen vials of gold before. But I had no idea you had to work so hard for a few specks of gold.

Joe said, "I belong to the Ohio State Prospector's Association."

What? Who knew there was such a thing in Ohio? As he wheeled his equipment down to the creek, we wished him good luck and continued on our way. And they say we hikers are crazy!

Victoria says: I googled it after our hike, and this is what I found: The Ohio State Prospectors Association is a non-profit organization founded in 2008 to promote recreational gold prospecting and gain rights for members to camp and pursue this hobby. They also work with state and federal agencies to coordinate sound environmental practices and make the public aware that gold prospecting does not negatively affect other lands and recreational usage. That is certainly one way to work off your stress from your job and spend time outdoors in nature. How intriguing!

For more of Victoria's BT adventures, go to: VictoriasTravelsAndTribulations.com/buckeye-trail-quest/

End.



Adams COUNTY, OH



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Travel & Visitors Bureau



Tag & Tor

-Jeri Getts & Karen Power

There are probably many reasons why we don't always say out loud what we're really thinking. In this case, Tag doesn't want to put a damper on Tor's enjoyment of the trail by complaining. After all, nobody likes to hike with a whiner. Truth be told, Tag's favorite part of hiking is not hiking. She likes the lunch breaks and anything else that involves sitting down.

2023 Schedule of Hikes & Events

Always check buckeyetrail.org/events.php for more information and last-minute updates, and to register for the work parties and the chuckwagon meals

JUNE

June 22-25, 2023

14th Annual E.G.G.S. Hike

Located at Burr Oak State Park and Wildcat Hollow, the E.G.G.S. Hike is a multi-day hike challenge that honors Emma Grandma Gatewood, a founding member of the Buckeye Trail Association. The event consists of hiking challenges of either 20, 40, 60, or 80 miles.

For more info and to register, go to buckeyetrail.org/eggs.php

Contact: oldmanscave@buckeyetrail.org

June 24, 2023

BTA Regular Board Meeting

Contact: Steve Walker at president@buckeyetrail.org for additional information.

JULY

July 8, 2023

Western Reserve Racing BT 50K

Brecksville Reservation and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park

11am to 5pm at Oak Grove Picnic Area - The BTA will be selling beer from the HiHO Brewing Co. at this event as a fundraiser with proceeds benefiting the Crooked River Chapter and the BTA. Crooked River Chapter Glasses will also be sold.

For race details:

westernreserveracing.com/races/buckeye-trail-50k/

To volunteer for beer sales:

meetup.com/crooked-river-chapter-buckeye-trail-association/events/290240536/

To volunteer for race support:

westernreserveracing.com/races/buckeye-trail-50k/

Contact: crookedriver@buckeyetrail.org

July 8, 2023

Forest Frolic Trail Race and Hike at Findley State Park

Enjoy the fantastic beauty of Findley State Park on the 5k trail race and hike! The event is a fundraiser for the park, and the park's Friends group hosts it. Funds raised will go towards park improvements, educational programs, and conservation and preservation within the park.

For race details:

runsignup.com/Race/OH/Wellington/ForestFrolicTrailRaceHike

Volunteer at the Lake Plains event:

email lakeplains@buckeyetrail.org

Contact: Valerie Gardner at valerie.gardner@buckeyetrail.org

July 8-12, 2023

BTA Work Party: Whipple/Road Fork Sections (TW Chapter)

It's the height of summer, and what better way to get outside and enjoy the outdoors than joining The Wilderness Chapter in Washington County for some heavy trail maintenance along the Whipple and Road

Fork Sections. We'll be engaging in vegetation control, re-benching some of the trail, and clearing any fallen trees. We will depart for the work site at 8:00am.

Meals: The BTA Chuckwagon will be parked at camp. Breakfast and dinner will be provided, along with plenty of choices to pack yourself a trail lunch.

Camping: Little Muskingum Watershed Association, Ohio 26, New Matamoras, Ohio.

Sign Up: bit.ly/3DhJqVR

Contact: roadfork@buckeyetrail.org or whipple@buckeyetrail.org

July 21-23, 2023

Summer Mushroom Camp

Save these dates for the BTA's Summer Mushroom Camp at the BTA's Beall Farmstead and Barn near Deersville OH. No registration is required for this event. More info to follow.

July 22-26, 2023

BTA Work Party: Burton Section (CR Chapter)

We have a good sized reroute to complete along the trail off of Rapids Rd in the Burton Section. Join the BTA as we build new trail and as well as a bridge. We'll be clearing the trail corridor, grubbing out trees and shrubs, and laying a new trail tread.. We will depart for the work site at 8:00am.

Meals: The BTA Chuckwagon will be parked at camp. Breakfast and dinner will be provided, along with plenty of choices to pack yourself a trail lunch.

Camping: TBD.

Sign Up: bit.ly/3DhJqVR

Contact: burton@buckeyetrail.org

AUGUST

August 12-16, 2023

BTA Work Party: Delphos Section (ME Chapter)

It's the dog days of summer, but the BTA has plenty of work to complete do this year. The Miami & Erie Canal Chapter will be rerouting the trail to complete in the Delphos section, moving the old trail out of a canal and back onto the adjacent towpath. We are also going to be fixing a length of existing trail that has slid due to erosion and ground slump. If construction is more your thing, help us build a tent platform at a back-country campsite! We will depart for the work site at 8:00am.

Meals: The BTA Chuckwagon will be parked at camp. Breakfast and dinner will be provided, along with plenty of choices to pack yourself a trail lunch.

Camping: TBD

Sign Up: bit.ly/3DhJqVR

Contact: delphos@buckeyetrail.org

August 17-20, 2023

Buckeye TrailFest

The Buckeye TrailFest offers a long weekend packed full of hikes, workshops, presentations, speakers, and social opportunities. Come for the whole weekend or come for the day. There is something for everyone. Shawnee Lodge in Shawnee State Park/Forest, in southwestern Ohio, is the location for this year's event. All the information, including hikes, programs, lodging, registration and more can be found at the TrailFest web page (<https://www.buckeyetrail.org/Trail-Fest/>)

Contact: trailfest@buckeyetrail.org

August, 20, 2023

BTA Annual Meeting at 9:00am | Board Meeting at 10:00am

Contact: Steve Walker at president@buckeyetrail.org for additional information

August 26-30, 2023

BTA Work Party: Mogadore Section (CR Chapter)

If you like building things, this work party is for you. We have one bridge to remove and two bridges to install along the trail at West Branch State Park. We will also be performing routine trail maintenance and mowing. We will depart for the work site at 8:00am.

Meals: The BTA Chuckwagon will be parked at camp. Breakfast and dinner will be provided, along with plenty of choices to pack yourself a trail lunch.

Camping: West Branch State Park Horseman's Camp

Sign Up: bit.ly/3DhJqVR

Contact: mogadore@buckeyetrail.org

September 16-20, 2023

BTA Work Party: Shawnee Section (AF Chapter)

Shawnee State Forest is gorgeous this time of year, and the Appalachian Foothills Chapter will be performing some much needed trail maintenance. Join us as we re-bench and clear the section of the trail that passes through the Shawnee State Forest Wilderness Area west of the south backpacking loop. We will depart for the work site at 8:00am.

Meals: The BTA Chuckwagon will be parked at camp. Breakfast and dinner will be provided, along with plenty of choices to pack yourself a trail lunch.

Camping: Shawnee State Park Campground

Sign Up: bit.ly/3DhJqVR

Contact: shawnee@BuckeyeTrail.org

September 22 —24, 2023

Fall Mushroom Camp

Save these dates for the BTA's Fall Mushroom Camp at the BTA's Beall Farmstead and Barn near Deersville OH. No registration is required for this event. More info to follow.

September 23, 2023

Crooked River Chapter - Little Loop Challenge

The Little Loop Challenge is an annual event held on National Public Lands Day to hike the entire 250+ mile "Little Loop" of the Buckeye Trail in one day. We do this by breaking it up into 77 segments and having 70-100 hikers sign up to hike one or more segments on the same day. It's a collective effort.

Sign Up: Registration and participation details to follow.

Contact: littleloop@buckeyetrail.org

S E P T E M B E R

September 2, 2023

Western Reserve Racing Leave No Trace Half Marathon, 15k, 5k, Camp Manatoc, Peninsula, OH

11am to 5pm - The BTA will be selling beer from the HiHO Brewing Co. at this event as a fundraiser with proceeds benefiting the Crooked River Chapter and the BTA. Crooked River Chapter Glasses will also be sold.

For race details:

westernreserveracing.com/races/leave-no-trace-trail-marathon-half-marathon/

To volunteer for beer sales:

meetup.com/crooked-river-chapter-buckeye-trail-association/events/290241206/

To volunteer for race support:

westernreserveracing.com/races/leave-no-trace-trail-marathon-half-marathon/

Contact: crookedriver@buckeyetrail.org

September 15-17, 2023

BTA Board and Staff Retreat

Contact: Steve Walker at president@buckeyetrail.org for additional information

O C T O B E R

October 6-7, 2023

Blue Blaze Festival

The Blue Blaze Festival is a celebration of the Buckeye Trail, bringing trail lovers to Shawnee, Ohio to enjoy a trail experience, explore Shawnee, and discover local crafts, food, drinks, and live music. The trail runs this year will include Half Marathon, 10K or a 5K distance. In addition, there will be a 10 Mile BTA hike, an overnight backpacking experience, and informal Family Fun Hike - 1 Mile & 5K option. All events start and finish in Shawnee and take place in the Wayne National Forest.

Registration: runsignup.com/Race/OH/Shawnee/RunForBlueBlazes

Contact: run4blue@buckeyetrail.org for additional information

October 21-22, 2023

BTA Work Party: Scioto Trail Section (AF Chapter)

Join the Appalachian Foothills Chapter at Point 12 in the Scioto Trail Section, where we will be rebenching the trail along 200-300 yards of fence rows near the tunnel under Rt 35.

Meals: This work weekend is NOT supported by the BTA Chuckwagon, so bring your own food for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. We will be eating lunch on the trail.

Camping: Scioto Trail State Park Campground

Sign Up: bit.ly/3DhJqVR

Contact: sciototrail@buckeyetrail.org

Buckeye Trail Association

P.O. Box 5
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