

BUCKEYE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Trailblazer



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IN THIS ISSUE...

- | | | | |
|---|---|----|--|
| 3 | Reflections of Buckeye TrailFest 2023 | 9 | BT Thru-Hiker Completes Arizona Trail |
| 4 | President's Message | 12 | The Power of Silence: Mindfulness on the Buckeye Trail |
| 5 | On the Trail | 14 | 2023 BTA Volunteer Awards |
| 6 | BTA Funds Report | 16 | Buckeye Trail Completionists |
| 7 | Tag and Tor <i>Trailblazer</i> Magazine is Going Green | 18 | 2023 List of Hikes and Events |
| 8 | 2,888 Miles on the Trail | 20 | New Member Form |

Editor's Note

We would like to make a clarification regarding the Wilderness Loop and the North Country National Scenic Trail in "A Short but Interesting and Entertaining History of the Buckeye Trail Maps" (Summer 2023 *Trailblazer* issue, pages 12 to 14). Generally known as the North Country Trail (NCT), the official designation of this trail is the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST). The NCNST officially follows the Wilderness Loop in the Road Fork and Whipple sections but not the portions of the loop within the Belle Valley and Stockport Sections.

Letter to the Editor

In response to Victoria Livingston's article in the Summer 2023 *Trailblazer* issue (pages 15-17) about the gold prospector: I loved Victoria Livingston's wonderful story about meeting the gold prospector along the road in the West Union section along Straight Creek. It solves an enduring mystery for many of us who were accompanying Randall Roberts in March 2016 as he was working his own circuit hike. It was my first real introduction to the notion that you never, ever know quite what you'll find on the trail.

We, too, were working our way up that same stretch along Straight Creek, just below where Baker-Hanselman Road intersects with Day Hill- Arnheim Road (Point 24 on my August 2012 map). It was a beautiful spring day with no vehicles on the road (it was a Sunday). We heard a noise and gradually saw that the noise was coming from the creek. We got closer and saw that there was a man in a wetsuit in the creek with some kind of hose and pump system. It was kinda cold out. It's kinda colder in the water. But he was in there on a Sunday around noon vacuuming the creek. It made no sense. We were looking at him, but he didn't see us, so we kept moving on. We tried really hard to guess what on earth he was doing. Someone ultimately suggested that there is a simple answer: That's where he had thrown the keys last night. Much laughter ensued and kept us moving along into the final miles of the nearly 14-mile epic road march of the kind Randall always organized. It is now clear, from the picture and the story, that we saw this prospector as well back in 2016 along this same stretch of road. I guess he wasn't looking for his keys.

Even with that odd encounter in the creek bed, we were still not prepared for what we found when we got to the end of the 14-mile hike. The church at the top of this road that we thought had been unoccupied because the congregation had moved to a new location was, in fact, now active with a different congregation. They weren't too happy with our having parked in their lot that morning. We all found notes on our cars. Then we heard a very loud voice from the pastor, who was not too pleased to see us. Randall managed to smooth it over with him so well that he arranged for the church to get a Trail Angel sticker by the end of it. We were lucky. A deputy sheriff was a member of the congregation and was prepared to have every one of our cars towed if the pastor wished it. The notes on our cars? "Man says tow. God says no." A lesson to be careful where you park, and that you never, ever know quite what you'll find on the trail.

- Jonathan Winkler



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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.

Cover photo: Hikers on the BT at
Mantua Bog State Nature Preserve
Photo credit: Todd Herzog

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Reflections of Buckeye TrailFest 2023

Randall Roberts

In 2015, shortly after Buckeye Trailfest, I wrote a piece reflecting on the experience I titled "A String That Goes Through My State" which appeared in the Summer 2015 Trailblazer issue - a piece I'm still proud of (you can find it at buckeyetrail.org/Trailblazer/2015-02-Summer.pdf). This year, I started to see a commonality within the presentations I sat in on or gave, which was reinforced by parts of a presentation given by American ultrarunner, Harvey Lewis.

Conservation and Preservation - We must protect and preserve our natural resources so that they can be enjoyed for generations to come. The power of being in nature can have a profound positive effect on our mental well being. Mildred "Peace Pilgrim" Norman (who was the first woman to thru-hike the entire Appalachian Trail) included contact with nature as one of the steps toward inner peace. Hike therapy is real.

Community - There are communities in nature that exist in balance and harmony. From the Arc of Appalachia website: "Species come and go over geologic time. It is only the communities that endure." Preserving and, in some cases, restoring those communities is the goal of our nature preserves. From the sage advice of Peace Pilgrim, "to find inner peace, one must find one's special place in the life pattern". Additionally, for mental health, one must have a strong support network. This can be family, friends, colleagues, or social groups. The BTA is a community that not only provides support with hiking logistics but can also provide inspirational and emotional support which may even lead one to discover where they fit in. To achieve great accomplishments, one must have what Harvey called a "circle". This was seen quite literally as American ultrarunner, Kelly O'Dell, spoke about her Badwater 135 race where she depended on her crew to motivate her to the finish, and she did finish!

Support - To be part of the community we must provide support to others. In order to accomplish more than we can on our own, we must receive support from others.

Perseverance - Emma Gatewood went back to finish the Appalachian Trail after her first failed attempt. Once she set her mind to something, she was determined to finish - just like some EGGS hikers must return the following year to achieve their goal, or the next. It takes perseverance to win a "last man standing" ultramarathon race that will only end when the competition quits or is otherwise unable to continue. Sometimes you need to rely on the support of others to give you that perseverance and it helps even more when you're part of a community.

Inspiration - Sometimes it takes just one person to show the rest of the world that something should be, could be, and can be done. Someone writing about a particular prairie being a botanist's dream can be the inspiration for Lucy Braun to lead the way in scientific research which in turn can be the inspiration for Land Conservancy. When a 67 year old grandmother completes the Appalachian Trail, she is an inspiration to others for generations. When someone completes a 20 mile challenge with just minutes remaining, she can be an inspiration to others. When a 101 year old can still run a marathon, he is an inspiration to even the best of the ultrarunning athletes. When you share your story and your accomplishment, no matter how big or small, you may be the needed inspiration to someone else.

The inspiration for the Buckeye Trail came in 1958, but the existence of the trail continues to inspire people. Trail users are a community with several subcommunities. The BTA is a community. The BTA must persevere in the mission to build, maintain, protect, and promote the Buckeye Trail. We can only do that with support.

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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.

President's Message

Steve Walker

Here's hoping that you've all had a great Summer. As is usual, lots of things happened this Summer on the Buckeye Trail or with Buckeye Trail Association folks. Some of them were Buckeye Trail Crew Work Parties, some of them were BTA Weekend Circuit Hikes (ably led by Richard Morgan) and one of them involved BTA members hanging out in the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Natural Resource Park during the 2023 Ohio State Fair. And, several of them involved our ten BTA Chapters.

Although the idea of having BTA Chapters had been around a long time, it took over fifty years for the concept to finally take root. In 2012, BTA member, Darryl Smith, conceived a BTA Chapter based in Southwest Ohio centering on the Williamsburg, Loveland, Caesar Creek and Troy Sections of the Buckeye Trail. This first, homegrown BTA Chapter was called the Miami Rivers Chapter and it helped spawn the nine other BTA Chapters that came afterward.

Other Chapters started appearing a couple years later and there has been occasionally spurts where a couple new chapters were formed in a short amount of time. Most recently, the Appalachian Foothills Chapter and the Ohio River Chapter became the ninth and tenth BTA Chapters in the same year. Back in 2020, the Lake Plains and the Miami & Erie Canal Chapters were chartered in the same year. As it stands right now, all Sections of the Buckeye Trail have a BTA Chapter looking after them and even Central Ohio, which has no Sections of the Buckeye Trail inside its footprint, has a BTA Chapter.

As its main focus, the BTA Summer 2023 Board and Staff Retreat had a look at the progress of the BTA Strategic Plan which took effect on January 1, 2020 and runs through December 31, 2025 and seeing if any refinement was needed to see our Strategic Plan through its final two years. When the Strategic Plan launched on January 1, 2020, there were only five BTA Chapters.

Goal 3B identifies the hopes and aspirations of the BTA in regard to its growing Chapter program. One action that was suggested in the original draft of the Strategic Plan was the creation of a Chapter Leadership Council and having quarterly meetings of that Council that would be called Chapter Leadership Summits. By the beginning of 2021, the leaders of the existing BTA Chapters were finally ready to gather for a Summit. The first Summit happened on January 28, 2021. Since then, they have all been virtual meetings where BTA

Chapter leaders discuss the BTA Chapter Program and collaborate to learn from and support each other.

Since that first Summit in January of 2021, there have been twelve virtual Summits altogether. Early on, there were discussions to, some day, have a live, in-person Chapter Leadership Summit. Finally, your BTA Chapter Leadership Council was able to schedule such a Summit and it occurred on a Saturday evening in September during the BTA Summer 2023 Board and Staff Retreat at the BTA Beall Farmstead on Tappan Lake.

With the weekend's focus being the BTA's six-year Strategic Plan, the Chapter Leadership Council took on the task of reviewing Goal 3B which, as mentioned above, deals with BTA Chapters and their futures.

The future of the Buckeye Trail Association is interwoven with the success of the BTA Chapter Program. Our Chapters are the future of the Buckeye Trail Association as it prepares for the growth of our organization that will inevitably come. The ten BTA Chapters are our front line workers in promoting, maintaining, and protecting the Buckeye Trail. They are the ones who we count on to carry the mission of the Buckeye Trail Association to the four corners of Ohio. I encourage you to find a BTA Chapter and help with that mission.

Steve Walker

president@buckeyetrail.org



BTA Chapter Leadership Summit, Saturday, September 16, 2023. Photo credit: Randall Roberts

On the Trail...



Photo credit: Başak Durgun

For those of you who were not able to join us this year at TrailFest... Wow! Thanks in part to each of our registrants, volunteers, presenters, and state and regional partners, our 10th annual Buckeye TrailFest was an amazing celebration of all things Buckeye Trail and of the greater Shawnee State Park and Forest region. Thank you all (130 participants plus more than 30 presenters!) for coming together to celebrate our work, our volunteers, our partners, our trail, and the region our trail traverses.

A few of us Hiked-In to TrailFest through some of Ohio's most beautiful, rugged, hot, and chigger-filled hills. The rest of us waited to brave the sunny, 70-degree weather to hit the trails in Shawnee State Park, Shawnee State Forest, Edge of Appalachia Preserve, Arc of Appalachia Preserves, and more. We learned about the culture and history of the area up on Buckhorn Ridge, the Portsmouth Murals, and of the expansive network of American Indian earthworks in the region. When the sun set, we headed back out for a moonlit paddle on Turkey Creek Lake, stargazed, and sat around evening campfires with old friends and new.

We learned about how to hike with kids and joined them on nature hikes to see the forest through their eyes again. We learned about the positive impact of our trail on our mental health and different ways to challenge or comfort ourselves while hiking the Buckeye Trail. We learned how to capture our trail experiences through nature journaling, landscape photography, and even through video - after watching the documentary, *Meandering Thru*, a story about love and a BT fastest known time (FKT).

We learned about amazing heroes like Grandma Gatewood, Lucy Braun, and Mildred "Peace Pilgrim" Norman. We also heard from Teddy Roosevelt himself and were inspired by fellow volunteers and the work of Buckeye Trail partners. We were inspired by the legacy of our heroes in our partners at the Arc of Appalachia Preserve, and The Nature Conservancy, and in the positive

perseverance of endurance runners, Harvey Lewis and Kelly O'Dell.

We learned about the landscape that we are a part of stewarding, the Central Appalachian Hardwood Forest, and the birds, butterflies, rattlesnakes, and many other plants and animals that call this place home. We also learned about the cryptid, Bigfoot. We learned what we can and cannot eat from our forest, how to cook on an open fire, and that Shawnee Lodge knows how to serve a lot of good food to a bunch of hungry hikers.

We learned about how the Buckeye Trail Association is making progress through our staff, volunteers, and our 10 BTA Chapters. We refreshed ourselves on wilderness first aid basics and honed our trail design, construction, and maintenance skills. We stocked up on BT gear from the Buckeye Trail Shop, put orders into the Buckeye Trail sign shop, and learned how to help grow our Buckeye Trail Town program. We met for our Annual Meeting and elected our representative Trustees (welcome to the BTA Board of Trustees, Sunny Sunyak and Tim Murphy!).

We did all this in a few short days in a very special part of Ohio. We passed the Buckeye TrailFest hiking stick from the Appalachian Foothills Chapter on to the Central Ohio Chapter to gather us all back together in about a year in Central Ohio. Thank you all for coming together to create such a positive moment for each of us. If success can be measured in smiles, then I believe we succeeded!

Please visit our Buckeye Trail Facebook Group to view and add to our growing set of beautiful photos from around the Buckeye Trail.

I hope to see you soon at our other upcoming events: Fall Mushroom Camp at the BTA Beall Farmstead at Tappan Lake, the Little Loop Challenge in northeast Ohio, the Blue Blaze Festival in the Village of Shawnee, or many other BTA Chapter or partner events and trail work parties remaining for the year!

Please visit our events calendar for more details, more events, and registration information.

Thank you for Hiking!

Andrew Bashaw
Executive Director
Buckeye Trail Association

Thank you! Buckeye TrailFest Partners, Sponsors, and Volunteers!



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Niles Township Fire Department • North Country Trail Association
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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.

MAY 2, 2022 TO AUGUST 1, 2023

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Merri Wozniak (In thanks and gratitude to trail angels, George Tyo and Pat Lewis)

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
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Full page (7.5" x 10")	\$240.00	\$720.00

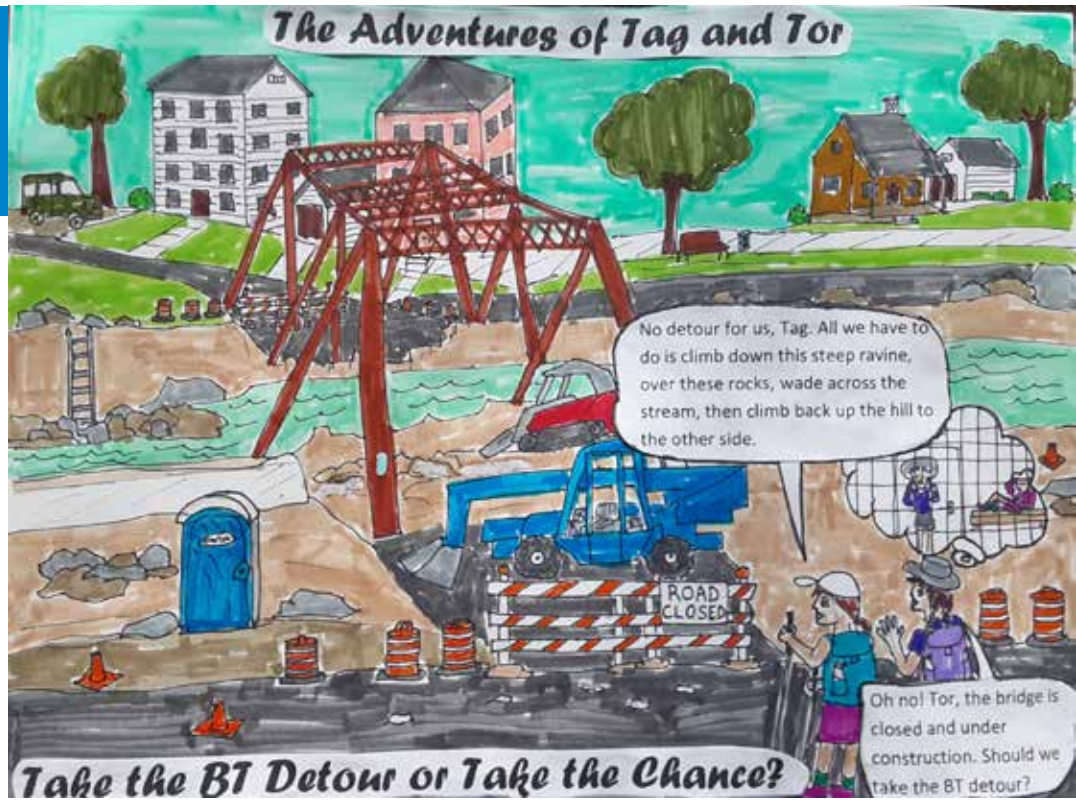
Submitted advertisements must be at a resolution of 300 dpi or greater. The BTA can provide some minimal graphic assistance for an additional moderate fee (email trailblazer@buckeyetrail.org for more details). The BTA reserves the right to decline ads that may conflict with our mission.

Tag & Tor

-Jeri Getts & Karen Power

The Buckeye Trail crosses a bridge in the Bowerston section, which, in 2019, was closed and under reconstruction. Somehow, Tag and Tor missed the trail alert about the detour, so when they reached the bridge on their hike, they found themselves in a bit of a quandry.

The situation brought about a lively discussion of the options between the two friends. One pointed out that the detour was long, the day short (and hot). Her keen eye spotted a way down the ravine, across the stream, up the other side, and through the construction zone. The other friend had no enthusiasm whatsoever for the ambitious plan. She thought it was risky—not only was it dangerous, but also illegal, bringing to her friend's attention the possibility of getting a fine or even arrested for trespassing if caught. The friendly banter back and forth went on for a full five minutes before logic and reason - and their friend, Suzanne - won the day. Suzanne offered to drive them around the construction zone in her car and drop them back on the trail on the other side. Which she did. Thanks, Suzanne!



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Trailblazer Magazine is Going Green

The Buckeye Trail Association has been able to provide a printed and mailed Trailblazer Magazine to BTA Members for years after most nonprofits transitioned to electronic versions of their newsletters. The world has continued to evolve post-COVID and through a period of increased costs. As a result, less and less of BTA membership dues are going to the BTA's mission to build, maintain, protect, and promote Ohio's Buckeye Trail. The current cost of design, print, and postage for four quarterly magazines is approaching \$15/year, roughly half of a BTA Individual Membership.

We are phasing out the printed Trailblazer included in the cost of BTA membership, but will honor the remaining printed subscriptions expected from our current one to three year memberships. We will offer the opportunity to purchase printed subscriptions at cost and the electronic version of the Trailblazer Magazine will remain free and downloadable for all. We will be reaching out to all Life and Honorary BTA Members separately who do not receive renewal letters with notices and options to purchase a subscription regularly.

Thank you for your understanding, and for supporting the mission of the Buckeye Trail Association with your membership contributions, your volunteerism, and your boots on the Trail!

2,888 miles on the Buckeye Trail

By Karen “Tagalong” Power



Group photo with Jeri Getts, Cindy Sommers, and supportive friends.
Photo courtesy of Karen Power

Jeri “Tortuga” Getts, who grew up in Miamisburg, Ohio, walked the entire Buckeye Trail (BT) twice, completing her second circuit at Headlands Beach on May 22, 2023. Jeri joins the ranks of the elite handful of hikers to have completed the 1,444-mile hiking trail twice; she is also the second woman to have walked the four corners of Ohio for a second time.

Probably better known to *Trailblazer* readers as the cartoon character “Tor” in the “Adventures of Tag and Tor,” Jeri is the artist of the duo. Tag and Tor (and others) have had some extraordinary and humorous adventures on the BT.

Several events, for some reason, involved car mishaps: leaving car keys in the wrong car only to have to backtrack on completed miles; waiting hours to retrieve keys locked in the car; waiting on tow trucks to rescue a car or a van stuck in the mud; arriving to the end point of a long day only to realize the car had been accidentally “misparked” eight miles away. Each time, the trail and the good Lord provided. All mishaps ended well and with much laughter in the aftermath. Spoiler alert: Look for an upcoming cartoon about two county workers turned trail angels who gave Tor and Cindy Sommers a wild ride in the back of their open-bed utility truck during the chill of winter.

Why hike the Buckeye Trail twice? The reasons are many. Jeri discovered Ohio’s historic gems. The BT was designed to take the foot traveler by some of the most extraordinary events in Ohio’s history. Jeri walked by



Photo of Jeri Getts by Cindy Sommers during a hike in the Stockport Section.

the site of the Battle of Fallen Timbers; the crash site of the first Navy airship; the world’s largest effigy mound, Serpent Mound; the iconic Goodyear Blimp facility; the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library; and the largest Air Force Museum in the US. She even took a ride on a canal boat in Canal Fulton. Before the Counterfeit House near the Ohio River was removed, Jeri and Tag peeked in the window of the decrepit structure to see if they could find the fabled bloody handprint on the wall of the unfortunate federal agent who was murdered trying to catch the counterfeiters.

Another reason for hiking the BT twice is that Jeri enjoys present day Ohio. Her favorite section of the BT is Stockport. Backcountry gravel roads wind through Amish farm areas and wooded foot paths. These hills and the scenic views have been an inspiration since American Indians first arrived in the area thousands of years ago. Jeri also had the opportunity to lodge in historic places along the trail: The Stockport Mill, Steele Mansion in Painesville, and the Mill House Bed and Breakfast in the Defiance Section. Each offers a unique slice of history of a young state of Ohio.

Another reason for Jeri’s encore hike is that she enjoys the physical challenge of the trail. The trail is a mix of road walks, farmlands, and wilderness areas. Hiking in sections, and mostly day hiking, she

accomplished her second trip in 109 days, averaging 13 miles per day. Some find the road walks inhibitive. Not Jeri: “Although the wooded trails are so pretty to hike, I really enjoy the backcountry roads which probably comprise over half of the BT road walking.” By far, Jeri’s most notable reason for hiking the BT a second time is the network of friends she has made since she began hiking the BT in 2015. Section hiking takes a great commitment of time, money, and travel to reach trailheads, but what surpasses any inconvenience or expense is to reconnect once a month on a circuit hike with her many friends from all over Ohio.



Cindy Sommers and Jeri Getts completing the Buckeye Trail.

Jeri continues to give back to the trail. A caterer by trade, Jeri has provided trail magic for hungry fellow hikers. She also assists with trail maintenance in the Troy section, and supports the work of others financially. “I am so grateful to all those who not only maintain the trail but to those who hiked with me or have supported me with shuttles, a place to stay, or a delicious meal. There are many ways to support the trail and its hikers.” What’s next for Tor? Jeri has 100 miles already hiked toward her next circuit of the Buckeye Trail. A third trip around Ohio may very well be in her future.

A note of thanks from Jeri: A big thank you to Karen Power, Cindy Sommers (completion May 22, 2023), Karen Fisk, Jim Gilkey, Richard Morgan, Jay Shutt (completion May 22, 2023), Maria Wingard, Kristine Stevens, Sandy Barlett, Nancy Shepherd, Mary McKean, and many others for the many miles they spent with me on the trail. And to my husband Joe who encouraged and supported me both times around.

BT Thru-Hiker Completes the Arizona Trail

Karen “Tagalong” Power



Captain Blue at the Grand Canyon

“Going down is optional. Going up is mandatory” Andy “Captain Blue” Niekamp solemnly said as we stood on the Arizona Trail (AZT) at the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. He was referring to a warning sign on the trail. A successful hike not only depends on a safe descent but also depends on a safe 4000’+ uphill climb.

Andy only had 14 miles to go as a northbound hiker on the AZT. He had started this adventure 87 days before at the US-Mexico border, and had successfully reached the Utah border, the AZT Northern Terminus. But there was a natural turn of unexpected events. And now he found himself on the AZT on the North Kaibab Trail, a steep corridor that descends to the Colorado River. This hike would be his second rim-to-rim backpacking trip down into the Grand Canyon in just 18 days.

Most AZT hikers only do the Grand Canyon once. Some AZT hikers this year didn’t do it at all. A record snowfall, which caused rockfall and landslides, made the North Kaibab Trail impassable, and the National Park service unexpectedly closed the trail to all hikers on April 7 until it could be properly repaired.

“All part of the journey,” as Andy says. He describes the Arizona Trail from A to Z in its diversity. From triple digit heat to a bitter cold that barely reaches double digits, extreme temperatures made for a dynamic relationship with the trail. Andy learned quickly how to adapt and adjust to the extreme temperatures and the rugged terrain. He began his journey on the US-Mexico border in the Sonoran Desert, a grassland environment where the iconic arms of the colossal Saguaro cactus grace the landscape. Within six miles, he ascended from the 5900’ at the border to 9000’ above sea level.

The Superstition Mountains and wilderness area, the Four Peaks Range and Wilderness Area, and the Mazatzal Range and wilderness area which began 400 miles into his northward-bound journey, were Andy’s most memorable treks. In this stretch, he discovered “sky islands.” They are what their name suggests: isolated areas that rise from the desert floor as islands rise from the sea. The climate with its cool air saturated with moisture provides a hospitable environment for diverse plant and animal life. Sky islands, unique to Arizona, are alpine oases, standing in stark contrast to the dusty, hot, sage brush-covered trail thousands of feet below. The cool, fresh air was a welcomed change from the dry desert air for Andy.

Andy reached the Grand Canyon just before Memorial



Captain Blue at Northern Terminus of the AZT (Utah - Arizona State Line).

Day, but the trail was not set to reopen until June 16. Fully aware of the trail closure but determined to finish, Andy completed what he could on the South Kaibab trail of the Grand Canyon and then returned to Ohio to wait out the repair. A journey that started 87 days prior was interrupted with a long 18-day hiking hiatus as repairs were completed.

It was a rough year for hikers. The record snowfall and saturated soil not only demolished part of the North Kaibab Trail but also created “miles of muddy slogs and washed-out trail” elsewhere on the AZT (Arizona Trail E-News, June 2023, par. 1). Hundreds of downed trees were a problem, not just for the hiker but for the trail maintainers. It was their job to keep the trail clear for the hikers, and they were anxious to get started. But before anything could be done about clearing the deadfall, the trail maintainers needed information. The trail director of the AZT realized he needed help.

He appealed to one of the AZT's greatest assets: the people with boots on the trail—the AZT hikers. He blasted a message via social media: “If you're on the Colorado Plateau, please help us locate downed trees!”

Andy has a knack for being at the right place, at the right time. As the former Troy Section Supervisor for the BT, Andy knew exactly what information the trail maintainers needed. He acted on the opportunity to help. As Andy hiked north, he created GPS waypoints of every deadfall tree and took pictures of trees that blocked the trail or had fallen dangerously onto fences or gates. Andy documented 160 trees. It was time-consuming and it slowed Andy's progress, but he was willing to help.

The next step was crucial. According to Arizona Trail E-news, using Andy's information, “[v]olunteers...worked in GIS software to create and share an interactive map of the ‘targets’ usable by Forest Service staff, passage stewards and other sawer-certified ATA volunteers. It not only help[ed] locate the downed trees, but allow[ed] notes to be left when an obstacle has been cleared to prevent duplication of effort” (June 2023, par. 2). In his email of thanks to Andy, the director acknowledged that knowing where the downed trees were “was a real game changer” by reducing the travel time and effort to locate the trees. Having a photo of the downed tree helped the volunteers know what tools to bring. It took one intrepid hiker to locate the trees and an army to clear them.

As I stood on the North Kaibab trail looking down, I began to wonder what I had gotten myself into. Joining Andy on the trail for his final miles so that I could write about his experience on the 800-mile AZT seemed like a good idea when I was in Ohio. Now I was uncertain. Sure enough, the descent was steep, and I found the repaired trail unnerving. Heavy gauge eyehooks and a rope tied around a large rock with a very thin sliver of a trail were the only things that separated me from imminent tragedy. I made Andy go first. Thankfully, the rope held. I was hot and tired, and the heat was relentless. As we made our way down, the temperature gradually increased by about 20 degrees. When we reached the bottom, it was over 100 degrees.

The Grand Canyon is considered the “crown jewel” of the AZT. Larger than the state of Rhode Island, the canyon is 277 miles long, 18 miles wide, and one mile deep. The canyon was formed by years of erosion. The Colorado River cut its way down through three sets of rocks, five geologic eras, and nine major geologic layers. Describing the Grand Canyon as spectacular is an understatement. Andy calls it the most beautiful and his most challenging leg of the AZT. The Grand Canyon is also considered the most deadly according to National Park Service statistics. The searing heat and low humidity lead to dehydration and heat exhaustion. The helicopter pad, the chest of emergency provisions, and a family we met in apparent distress seven miles into the Canyon on the North Kaibab Trail at a rest house were sobering reminders of how treacherous this trail can be. Andy had prepared me well when he instructed me to stay hydrated, wear clothing with UV ray protection and to carry a sun umbrella.

How does the AZT compare to the Buckeye Trail (BT)? Andy fondly refers to his trek around Ohio as encompassing the four P's: people, places, past, and present. He recalls the Buckeye Trail family who supported him with food, shelter, and encouragement. He discovered that his home state is rich with scenic beauty, major industries, and a colorful history. In comparison, Andy found that other hikers and designated trail angels were few and far between on the AZT. He came to depend on his hitchhiking skills to get to and from the trail. Some of his rides were 30 miles or longer.

When Andy began his hike on March 22 of this year, so did 20 other hikers. However, the three contiguous mountain ranges and three forest areas are 160 miles of strenuous and lonely trail, miles from any gateway communities. According to Andy,



Karen Power at the Grand Canyon, North Kaibab Trail. Photo credit: Andy Niekamp.



Andy descending down North Kaibab Trail. Photo credit: Karen Power.

this stretch was so tough that many hikers gave up after Superstition Mountain. As the trail difficulty, the unexpected trail closure, and the lingering snow thinned the number of hikers, solitude at times turned into loneliness for Andy, something he didn't experience on the BT.

The main difference between the AZT and BT and any other long-distance trail that Andy has ever completed is the scarcity of water. According to Andy, "That water is life is nowhere more apparent than in the desert. The hiker cannot survive on the AZT using only natural water sources." Streams are more available in Northern Arizona, but in the desert, Andy relied on community water caches placed in bear boxes or metal containers by trail angels. Often, however, he collected and purified water from cattle ponds, cattle troughs, wildlife tanks or cisterns that resembled UFOs (*pictured in the top right*). Sometimes Andy had to carry enough water to last an entire 20-mile day.

In the few miles I spent with Andy on the trail, collecting water from a water cistern gave me pause. Bugs and algae and other tree litter floated in the water. But we were thirsty and needed water. We filtered big chunks with a cheesecloth, purified with chlorine, and were on our way, feeling thankful that the source had been right next to the trail. Andy described using cow ponds for drinking water as much more of a challenge. Cattle ponds were usually in marshy areas with poor accessibility. Hoof prints in the mud and cow paddies in the grass were unwelcomed sights for him. Despite the challenges, Andy thrived on the AZT.

How did I fare on my first AZT hike? I am happy to report that I made the hike out of the Canyon Grand successfully. I left the Phantom Ranch Camp at 1:30 am to avoid the most serious effects of the heat and reached the South Rim by 10:30 am—a nine-hour hike. I compare it to hiking up a set of stairs for ten miles carrying a 20-lb pack on a hot day. Andy didn't leave camp as early as I did, and he reached the rim by 8:30 am, a quick 5-hour hike for him. As adventures go for me, I am glad for the privilege I had to hike a small piece of the AZT, but the BT will always be my favorite trail. As for Andy? His next adventure may be a southbound hike on the AZT, just for fun.



Rainwater Collector. Photo credit: Andy Niekamp



Saguaro Cacti during a super bloom. Photo credit: Andy Niekamp

AZT Fast Facts

- The AZT is 800 miles long. It runs north-south, the length of Arizona from the US-Mexico border to Utah.

- A thru-hike takes six to eight weeks to complete.

- Southbound (SOBO) hikers begin in September to avoid the snow and ice that collects in October and November on the Colorado Plateau. The advantage is that by the time SOBOs reach the Sonoran Desert, cooler temperatures prevail.

- Northbound (NOBO) hikers start in the Sonoran Desert. They begin in early March to avoid the intense spring heat the desert brings.

- The AZT is a young trail. The AZT became a national scenic trail in 2009. Its final section completed in 2011.

- The AZT traverses four national forests (Coconino, Coronado, Kaibab, Tonto) and four national park systems (Coronado National Monument, Saguaro National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, Walnut Canyon National Park).

- The highest point on the AZT is the Grand Canyon at 9,139 feet; the lowest point, the Gila River at 1,646 feet near Superior, Arizona.

--facts from *Your Complete Guide to the Arizona National Scenic Trail* by Matthew J. Nelson and the Arizona Trail Association. Wilderness Press, 6th edition, 2021.



Sunset at Bee Hive Well. Photo credit: Andy Niekamp

The Power of Silence

Mindfulness on the Buckeye Trail

David Harris

Overture

For most of my life, I have lived either on the Buckeye Trail or very close to it. However, most of the time, I didn't know. I first lived in Cincinnati, Ohio, and didn't know that the Buckeye Trail made its way through the great metropolis. Then, through my preteen and teen years, I lived on the banks of the Little Miami State Scenic River in Warren County, Ohio with the Buckeye Trail going through our property. Now, as an adult, I live in Allen County, Ohio, 100 miles to the north, but still within a few miles of the Buckeye Trail as it follows the historic Miami & Erie Canal.

The following paragraphs tell the story of a person living his entire life along the Buckeye Trail and discovering the power of silence along the trail. I am truly honored and blessed to have had access to such a special footpath and to take advantage of the power it possesses.

Act 1

When I was a child, growing up in Southwest Ohio, along the banks of the Little Miami River, I often found myself faced with the relentless battle of being the annoying younger brother of two old brothers who seemed to despise everything about me (totally normal I am sure). However, I often had a hard time dealing with the daily onslaught of insults, punches, blaming, and having brothers that were not my friends. When I think back to that time, I have vivid memories of how I got away from that. Sometimes I wandered into the hardwood forest between our house and my neighbor's house, a quarter mile away and just sat in silence. Other times I would climb to the highest tree I could find and 'hang out' amongst the birds in the high boughs. Now, don't get me wrong, there was no powerful moment of self-healing or religious experience going on here, it was just a boy who needed to get away and let his mind wander to a place that wasn't with brothers and the frustration of dealing with emotions. The silence was the catalyst that took me to places far away in my imagination: pretending to be someone I wasn't, someone better than who I was.

Prelude to Act 2

When I was a child, I didn't know what I was actually doing when I was separating myself from the chaos of life and relishing the power of silence. It was just something that a weird child like me did. It wasn't a religious experience like it has become now. I didn't view it as a self-soothing behavior like it really was, and I didn't use it to solve life and work problems as I do now. But now I understand that it was a way to lower my blood pressure, unclog my brain, and let my imagination have free reign. It was self-healing in the simplest form. With that in mind, I realized I could take advantage of that new understanding and use it to its fullest advantage. All you need is a place where you can allow silence to take over and let your thoughts be heard. The Buckeye Trail has been that place for me.



Author as a child hanging out in a tree. Photo courtesy of David Harris

Act 2

Fast forward to 2020 and the beginning stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a public school teacher, I found myself teaching from home on a computer to students on the other end attempting the, most likely, impossible feat of staying on track with their education. Students never had that experience, and teachers were thrown into it with a few days of preparation and expected miracles. It was a very stressful time and that is when I found myself feeling the need to self-isolate again and seek the power of silence.

However, this time, it was in a combined effort to lose weight, make improvements to my mental health, and plan miracles in the world of online public education. Like before though, it did so much more. This time it did all that and added an opening to better solidify my religious views as well. Each day after my online classes, I took walks. I walked everywhere (parks, empty roads, city sidewalks, etc.) but I found myself most often along the towpath of the Miami & Erie Canal following the Buckeye Trail. Once again, the trail provided the solace for the opera of my life. My mind still went on great journeys: I walked across America, staying only in people's yards, I hiked the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, North Country National Scenic Trail, and of course the complete Buckeye Trail. I became a canal boatman and floated from Cincinnati to Toledo. I walked the dreadful Trail of Tears, and I did many other things - all in my head. I planned my weeks' lessons for online schooling, and solved (or made a good ol' college try) the riddles of daily life and raising teens, lost lots of weight, and greatly improved my mental health. But something else happened along the packed dirt of the Buckeye Trail. I found out who was talking to me, giving me the ideas, and planting the seeds of imagination in my head: God.

Prelude to Act 3

I was raised as a Christian in a somewhat Christian home. I was baptized as an infant and obviously had no idea what that meant until much later. Growing up, my family first went to a Presbyterian church. We would not go every Sunday (mostly Easter and Christmas), and we didn't pray at mealtime or have religious conversations, but we were Christian nonetheless. Then my mother began going to Episcopal Church. She pretty much went alone for a while, but because I was at the age where I would go along with anything my parents asked me to, I tended to go with her eventually. Plus, I could almost guarantee a visit to a restaurant afterward. That's what church was to me at the time: an excuse to go out to eat. I went through Confirmation as simply going through the hoops of making my mother happy and proud of me, but I didn't do it for me and I would never say I was a faithful person at that time. As a young adult, I had little to no faith and couldn't answer basic questions like how did we get here, is there an all-mighty and all-knowing being, and does praying actually do anything (does God actually hear me and talk to me?). I guess you would say I was agnostic at best and an atheist realistically. I still struggle with the first three parts but through the power of silence and the Buckeye Trail, I have gained faith in understanding how God talks to me.

Act 3

As a young adult, I would say that being in silence was a religious experience, but I never could put my finger on how or why. Recently, I have started to become religious in a way I never have before. My wife - who had a similar past with religion as I - and

my youngest son started getting involved in the Mennonite faith, mainly because we live across the street from a conservative Mennonite church, and because my son has friends he plays with who went to the church. He would go along with them, then my wife started going along to supervise him. At that point, they listened to the calling and support from the members and have become members themselves. I have not yet, but fully support them along their journeys. As a result of this, I have begun studying the bible more and more and thinking more about my spirituality. Now back to the power of silence.

Once while walking in silence, near Deep Cut Historical Park, along the Buckeye Trail, I paused a minute, slowed my breathing, and then like a light bulb: I received a message of understanding. I learned how God speaks to me. God instructs me in my head to go seek the power of silence and open my head up for ideas to be seeded so they can grow and flourish in me. He is the one that plants solutions to the struggles of my daily life, helps plan my days, and calms my anxiety. He is the one that sends me on imaginative journeys to spark my emotions and longings, and He is the one that heals me and gives me a great reset.

Reprise

I would say that I am now a true Christian, but not a perfect Christian. It bothers me that some people try to convert people or make them feel like they need to find God, mainly due to it happening to me as a youth, and I am not trying to do that by telling this story. I am never going to try to force religion on someone or try to make them feel as if they need it, but I had to mention it to be able to describe the power of silence on the Buckeye Trail and how it moved me. Following religion or not following a religion is a very personal experience and it is my belief that no human should try to make someone believe or not believe in any way.

Everyone can use this opera of my life that I am sharing with you to harness the power of silence and go find an empty forest, tree top, lonely trail, or calming stream-side rock to heal, think, plan, go on amazing journeys, and most importantly listen to the silence and get out of it whatever you need to get out of it. Next time you are driving anywhere near the 1,444-mile route of the Buckeye Trail stop, get out, find a quiet place, and just think and listen. It may change your life like it did mine.



Blue blaze near Deep Cut (Delphos Section). Photo credit: David Harris



Church in Kassouth, OH by the BT (Delphos Section). Photo credit: David Harris

2023 BTA Volunteer Awards

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

This is presented to any individual, city, agency, business, or organization that has demonstrated exemplary cooperation and diligence to perpetuate and improve the Trail and Association, and must have helped in some significant way to aid the Association attain an important objective.

Joel Yott

Joel and his employees were engaged in the Burr Oak Boardwalk and bridge project from the very beginning. Joel was present every day of the work week, contributing to real-time problem solving. He and his staff were true partners in this project, and we could not have done it without them!

Geoffrey Ostrander

Geoffrey has been helping the BTA on the Rapids Rd. reroute project since early May and has volunteered over 100 hours of his time in trying to make this project a reality. Geoff is a hardworking individual, who needs very little supervision.

BUCKEYE TRAIL BLAZER AWARD FOR LEADERSHIP BY EXAMPLE

Awarded to person(s) who have exhibited superior service and leadership by example in appointed or volunteer tasks.

Valerie Gardner

Valerie Gardner is the co-chair for the Lake Plains Chapter of the Buckeye Trail. Valerie dedicates a substantial portion of her time to not only her Chapter, but also the organization as a whole. Valerie helps in many areas behind the scenes, filling in wherever she is needed. Valerie Gardner does many things that sustain and improve the Buckeye Trail Association behind the scenes. Valerie analyzes and reports membership data to the BTA Board and membership as a Membership Committee Co-Chair. She co-chairs the Marketing and Social Media Working Group. Valerie goes above and beyond as a leader and volunteer.

BTA TRUSTEE EMERITUS

This is the only recognition that is set aside for members of the Board of Trustees as they leave the service of the Board. The nominee should have accumulated at least nine years as Board Member and must have demonstrated consistent commitment and continued service to the Board, the Association, and the Trail, through exceptional diligence at their assignments and at least one notable achievement to their credit.

Linda Paul

Linda has served in three full terms on the BTA Board. Elected in 2014, Linda has served as the Board Secretary and presently serves as head of the Blue Blaze Society and Chair of the Scholarship Committee. Her work and commitment to the BTA has helped see the organization through COVID-19 and has been instrumental in helping to put the BTA on sound financial footing, its growth in programming, and expansion of professional staff. Her pragmatism and patience serve as a model for every member of the Board.

THE JAMES SPRAGUE BUCKEYE TRAIL ADOPTER AND BUILDER AWARD

Presented to person(s) who have exhibited superior service to their adopted segment of the Buckeye Trail and/or work on the Buckeye Trail Crew. These individuals maintain their segment so that it is always ready and a pleasure to hike. They maintain their records and report hours, travel, and any problems to their supervisors.

Ann Furste

Ann Furste has shown exemplary dedication to the Buckeye Trail in her role as the New Straitsville Section Supervisor. In addition to keeping her adopted section well maintained, she wears many hats in her engagement with the section by leading chapter discussions, hosting volunteer work days in her section, hosting group hikes, and attending Buckeye Trail Work parties in throughout the state. In 2023, Ann has organized the boardwalk replacement and installation at Doc 3 at Burr Oak State Park.

Terry Blackstone

Terry Blackstone is currently the Buckeye Trail Chuckwagon Master. Terry has, for several years, hauled the Chuckwagon around the state, developing menus, shopping for supplies, and setting up and preparing three meals a day for hungry trail volunteers. When the dishes are done, Terry will often pick up the pulaski or DR mower and join the crew. Terry's work has fueled the extension and improvement of the Buckeye Trail.

THE BOB PATON AWARD FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE

Honors members who have contributed exceptionally meritorious services to the Association for at least fifteen years. Such services may pertain to trail maintenance, trail utilization and/or administrative or management functions.

Connie Pond

PRESIDENT'S AWARD (VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR) - Renamed in 2019, TRUSTEE EMERITUS

Bob Pond

PRESIDENT'S AWARD (VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR) - Renamed in 2019

Pat Hayes

PRESIDENT'S AWARD (VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR) - Renamed in 2019, TRUSTEE EMERITUS, BUCKEYE TRAIL BLAZER AWARD FOR LEADERSHIP BY EXAMPLE 2019

THE EMMA “GRANDMA” GATEWOOD AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Grandma Gatewood overcame adversity and challenges to achieve something great for herself and eventually for the Buckeye Trail as well. This award honors those that have achieved something for the Buckeye Trail in the prior year in the same spirit as the woman who persisted even after she was told she couldn't.

Byron Guy

Along with support from his wife, Shannon Guy, and brother, Jamie Guy, Byron has developed and organized the EGGS Hike for 14 years. Through EGGS, he has introduced hundreds of hikers to the BT, Burr Oak State Park, and Wayne National Forest. He has inspired several hikers to join the BTA as new and renewed members. Thanks to the Guys, hundreds to thousands of volunteer hours have been invested in the trail system there that has helped to forge a stronger partnership with our land managing hosts at Burr Oak State Park, Wayne National Forest, and beyond. Thanks to these efforts, money has been raised for the BTA and the Little Cities of the Forest Chapter. Byron has also spearheaded the development of a BTA State Sawyer Program, volunteered to serve as the Trail Management Team Chair position while still serving as a leader of the Little Cities of the Forest Chapter and the Old Man's Cave Section Supervisor.

RALPH REGULA AWARD FOR LEADERSHIP

At every level of government the BT and the BTA need the support of our elected decision makers to improve the Buckeye Trail experience. This award honors those elected officials who have made the BT or trails in general a priority for accomplishing some significant effort that benefits trails in Ohio.

Bev Trovato

Bev Trovato is the Mayor of the Village of Shawnee Ohio. As Mayor of a small town, Bev has a lot of responsibilities in addition to her day job. Bev has not been afraid to roll up her sleeves and participate with the Buckeye Trail Association, not just working hard as the Mayor of a designated Buckeye Trail Town. Bev is a founding member of Destination Shawnee, a local non-profit that does many things to improve the future of the Village surrounded by the Wayne National Forest, including special event creation, farmer's market development, and so much more. Bev not only participates with the Shawnee Trail Town Network that the BTA was instrumental in creating, but also volunteers for our annual Blue Blaze Festival (formerly Run for Blue Blazes). Bev enjoys the Buckeye Trail near town and reports trail issues to the New Straitsville Section Supervisor. Bev also keeps the BTA and our mission in mind when it comes to Village Council decision making and making sure the BTA has an opportunity to share our proposals, in addition to introducing us to local landowners and other statewide elected officials as they come to visit Shawnee for any purpose. Bev has been a champion for the BTA that she is a member of, and is a great example to mayors and elected officials around the state on how to embrace the BT as part of the town's future while being a part of the idea at the same time.

THE MERRILL GILFILLAN AWARD FOR VISIONARY AGENCY PARTNERS

For visionary agency partners that go above and beyond the call of their position to imagine and implement an improved Buckeye Trail experience in the spirit of the original 1958 article “A Buckeye Trail; So Far it is Just an Idea” written by ODNR's Merrill Gilfillan. Awardees do not accept the status quo of the trail we love today, they understand that agencies play an important role in the development, maintenance, protection and promotion of Ohio's State Trail.

Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District, c/o Craig Butler, Executive

The Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) has been an important partner of the Buckeye Trail Association since the early days of our formation, even serving as the master of ceremonies at the 1970 ceremonious completion of the then 500-mile BT development. In recent years, MWCD has increased the level of partnership by updating the Memorandum of Agreement and contract with the BTA on the Green Corridor initiative to connect MWCD Lakes with a preserved BT corridor. MWCD, under the leadership of Executive Director Craig Butler, increased staffing related to trail development and devoted significant staff time to various Buckeye Trail local efforts and regional efforts throughout the Muskingum. MWCD goes out of its way to connect the BTA to other partners and land managers, participates in promoting our hiking and volunteer events, and offering the BTA a place to grow our organization at the BTA Beall Farmstead.

Dawn McCarthy , Wayne National Forest

Dawn McCarthy is currently the Operations Staff Officer at the Wayne National Forest, but has been a champion for the Buckeye Trail throughout her career at the Wayne. Dawn is an exceptional agency partner who understands the value of nonprofit partners like the Buckeye Trail Association to the shared management and enjoyment of our public lands. Dawn has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to find creative solutions to trail relocation and improvements, grant opportunities, partner connections and more. Dawn has been an incredible advocate for the idea of the Buckeye Trail and the Buckeye Trail Association within the US Forest Service and beyond her agency's boundaries for over 15 years.

THE DR. ROY FAIRFIELD PRESIDENT'S AWARD

The nominee shall have either shown exceptional commitment to an assignment(s), or have made some major contribution of special benefit to the Association during the past year. Nominees who would be eligible for a certificate of appreciation can be considered for the President's award.

Kim Love-Ottobre

After years of little activity, Kim revitalized the Buckeye Trail Town Program when she took over the position in 2018. Since that time, Kim has helped several local communities become Buckeye Trail Towns.

Buckeye Trail Completionists

By Chuck and Beth Hewett

Once again, we would like to say “CONGRATULATIONS!” to those who have completed the entire Buckeye Trail. Volunteers can be overwhelmed by requests of their time and we learn later that individuals seeking information about the trail go unheeded and those who have completed the entire trail are not celebrated. Individuals who complete the entire BT have a wonderful perspective to offer the organization. Please, if you do complete the entire trail, let us use the opportunity to publicly acknowledge your accomplishment through various news channels and give the

Buckeye Trail much needed recognition. A hiker’s plaque has been created to celebrate a hiker’s completion of the Buckeye Trail. The plaque allows you to proudly display your accomplishment. It may also provide a little PR for the Buckeye Trail as you talk about your adventure. Thank you to those who have ordered a plaque (both section hikers and thru-hikers).

Below is an updated list of names of individuals who have completed a thru-hike of the completed loop trail (whatever form it was in at the time of their hike).

- 2000** John Merrill – *England*
- 2003** Brent & Amy Anslinger – *Miamisburg, OH*
- 2004** Peter and Joyce Cottrell – *Whitefield, NH*
- 2011** Andy Niekamp – *Dayton, OH*
- 2012** Denise Hill – *Cincinnati, OH*
- 2013** Mary Warren and Lisa Strohm – *Lancaster, OH*
- 2016** Chuck and Beth Hewett – *Hanoverton, OH*
Sterling Deck – *Warrior Expedition - Monroe, OH*
Martin Strange – *Warrior Expedition*

- 2017** Mei Ling Liber – *Warrior Expedition*
Preston Hudson – *Warrior Expedition*
Tom Helbig - *Dayton, OH*
- 2018** Don Lenc, (*oldest thru-hiker 72*) - *Monroe, OH*
Everett Brandt, (*2nd fastest thru-hike: 55 days*) - *OH*
- 2019** Luke Bushatz – *Warrior Expedition*
Chad Hiser – *Warrior Expedition*
Jim Logsdon - *Warrior Expeditions*
Lucas Smith, (*youngest thru-hiker 18*) – *Cincinnati, OH*
May 22 – Aug 7, 2019 (79 days)
- 2021** Dain Sutton– (*also was 18 years old*), April 24 - July 17
Josh Horsfall – (*fastest thru-hiker: 39 days, 5 hours*)

The trail has also been completed by section-hikers over a period of more than one year. The trail became a loop trail in 1980. Initially, it was 1,200 miles, but through the hard work of volunteers

building trail, it has gradually expanded to its current length around 1,444 miles. Those who have completed the loop trail through section hiking are as follows:

- March 1977 – Oct. 1983** Robert Starker – *Dayton, OH*
- March 1977 – Nov. 1983** Jim Ball, Charles W. Briggs, Jeanette (Kozeny) DeSimone, Gene DeSimone, Cecil Dobbins, Wilma Howard, Louise McConough, Victor Sandoff, Lowell Sanford, Louis Shinker, Clifton Tate (80) – *Akron-Cleveland, OH*
- 19?? – 1984** Michel Brindo – *Barberton, OH*
- 19?? – 1986** Tom Lavelle – *Cleveland, OH*
- 1980 – 1986** Jim Sprague – *Akron, OH*
- 19?? – 1987** Jytte Hansen – *Akron, OH*
- 1982 – 1988** Lynn Schreiber – *Cleveland, OH*
- 1989 – 1990** Paul Daniel – *Oxford, OH*
- Dec. 1989 – March 1992** Spencer Allen – *Columbus, OH*
- April 1989 – March 1992** Gary K. Calvert, Thelma Hill
- April 1989 – April 1992** Gary Calvert, Dick Wiegandt, Darlene Wiegandt, Don Hoffman – *Doylestown, Solon, Cleveland, OH*
- 19?? – 1994** Leo Deininger – *Cleveland, OH*
- 1997 – 1999** Harold Schneider
- 1992 – 2000** Jay Abercrombie
- July 1996 – July 2001** Jim Runk, Dana Zintek
- July 1996 – July 2002** Lisa Daiber-Zintek
- Aug. 1998 – Feb. 2002** Anne Snedaker
- Jan. 1998 – March 2003** Ruth Brown, Robert C. “Bob” Brown
- Jan. 2000 – Jan. 2004** Patrick Hayes
- Feb. 2000 – March 2004** Sandy S. Garry
- Nov. 1997 – July 2004** William T. Schultz
- Nov. 2002 – Dec. 2004** Cecilia Hartman
- Jan. 2003 – Dec. 2004** John A. Bowers
- Nov. 1997 – Dec. 2004** John Rethman

- April 1998 – May 2005** Don Beattie
- Sept. 1998 – Sept. 2005** Steven W. Trimble
- April 2000 – Dec. 2005** Louisa J. Kreider
- May 2002 – Feb. 2007** Richard E. Harris
- April 2003 – August 2007** Mary Baldwin, Mary Jane Decker, Beth Hanna, Harvey Hanna Jr., Jeanne Henry, Ed Horvath, Sharon Horvath, Laszlo Prisko, Rose Prisko, Marty Ritzert, Gayle Shroy, Robert Shroy and Denise & Dave Tobiasz from *North Olmsted, OH*
- Jan. 2002 – June 2008** David Janosko, Kenny Janosko (16 years old)
- Sept. 2003 – Dec. 2008** Chris McIntyre
- Dec. 1997 - April 2009** Bob Pond, Connie Pond
- May 2009 – Aug. 2009** Peter W. Cottrell, Joyce G. Cottrell
- April 2003 – Aug. 2009** Karen Krause, Ted Krause
- April 2007 – Aug. 2010** Sean Owens
- May 2003 – Aug. 2011** Bob Simons
- May 2003 – Sept. 2011** Michael E. Hooper, Paul G. Imhoff Jr.
- Aug. 2005 – Nov. 2001** John Fetzer – *Painesville, OH*
- Sept. 1999 – March 2012** Gary Wooddell, Gwendolyn I. Wooddell
- April 2009 – July 2012** CW Spencer
- Sept. 2009 – Aug. 2012** Richard Morgan
- Fall 2005 – Aug. 2012** James Wright
- Aug. 2012 – July 2013** Mary L. Warren, Lisa A. Strohm
- March 2005 – Aug. 2013** Kathleen A. Fix
- Aug. 2007 – Dec. 2013** James Gilkey
- Nov. 2004 – May 2016** Karen L. Walker – *Navarre, OH*
- March 2006 – Nov. 2016** Dianne K. Bell
- April 2014 – April 2017** George Tyo
- April 23, 2007 - April 24, 2017** Beverly Phillips

Dec. 1995 – May 2017 Joan Young
Nov. 2008 – May 2017 Randall Roberts — *OH*
Nov. 2004 – July 2018 Tim Gerber — *MD*
July 2008 – Nov. 2018 Mary Ruth Green
Aug. 2008 – Nov. 2018 Jeanne DeLaney
2008 – Nov. 2018 Mary Ruth Grubbs Green
Dec. 31, 2009 - June 30, 2019 Dale J. Wical
June 2017 – June 2019 Andrew “Mr. Truth” Prill
Aug. 2015 – Sept. 2019 Kyle Browning
April 2013 – Oct. 2019 Karen Fisk
2014 - Oct. 2019 Jim Gilkey (Second time!)
April 2014 – Oct. 2019 Richard Morgan (Second time!)
Nov. 2013 – Oct. 2019 Kathleen Fix (Second time!)
20?? – Oct. 2019 Jacob Thompson, Maria Wingard
May 2015 – Oct. 2019 Jen Weaver — *Cortland, OH*
Oct. 2015 – Oct. 2019 Bonnie and CW Spencer (Second time!)
Sept. 2016 – Oct. 2019 Nancy Shepherd
April 2018 – Oct. 2019 Nathan Simpson
Jan. 2015 – Nov. 2019 Karen Power
Aug. 2015 – Nov. 2019 Jeri Getts, Karen Power
Sept. 2016 – Sept. 2020 Eileen Gerson — *Mentor, OH*
Sept. 2016 – Nov. 2020 Dan Herris, Cathy King —
N.Royalton, OH & Pepper Pike, OH

Feb. 2017 – Dec. 2020 Julie Melzak — *Beachwood, OH*
Oct. 2018 – Dec. 2020 John Chappel — *Wadsworth, OH*
June 2021 – Aug. 2021 Daniel Schmidt
Feb. 2019 – June 2021 Richard Daugherty
Feb. 2019 – Nov. 2021 Jeff Yoest
July 2020 – Nov. 2021 Sandy Bartlett
April 2018 – Dec. 2021 John Smilek
Oct. 20?? – April 2022 Michael Foulkes
Feb. 2016 – May 2022 Matt Patterson
Sept. 2019 – May 2022 Christina Costarella
Oct. 2014 – June 2022 Dennis Betts
Aug. 2017 – July 2022 Susanne Klein
May 2, 2020 - July 20, 2022 Kristine Stevens — *Twinsburg, OH*
March 2018 - Oct. 2022 Patrick Buffington
July 2017 - Nov. 2022 Timothy J. Murphy — *Painseville, OH*
July 2017 - March 2023 Bill Hines, Raman Ras, Meg Sondey
Dec. 2016 - April 2023 Jon Martin — *Cincinnati, OH*
July 2018 - April 2018 Mike and Torri Brown — *Greenville, OH*
July 2018 - May 2023 Jay Shutt — *Westerville, OH*
March 2020 - May 2023 Jeri Getts — *Carisle, OH* (Second time!)
Sept. 2020 - May 2023 Cindy Somers — *Pataaskala, OH*

From February 1974 to June 1974, before the trail became a loop in 1980, the following individuals hiked the 500 miles from Lake Erie to Cincinnati: Cliff Thorniley (31) and four high school students from Heath, Ohio – Roger Jones (15), Rick Welsh (14), Carl Cooperider (13) and Craig Cooperider (15). They are listed as having been the 3rd through 7th BT thru-hikers and were honored by Governor Gilligan later in 1974, so who were the two earlier hikers?

Dana Zintek (see 2001 section hiker) found an article from the Record Courier (Ravenna, OH) January 26, 2005. 50th wedding anniversary announcement: Dr. Kenneth Rupp and Evelyn Rupp of Streetsboro completed walking the BT in 1970. The article did not state that it was a thru-hike.

An article in a Buckeye Trail publication lists Steve Inkel, Fairview Park (age 17) and Mark Larsen, Fairview Park (age 15) as having completed the Lake Erie to Cincinnati trail in 1972. So were there four and not two hikers who completed the trail before the Cliff Thorniley group?

Other hikers on record as having completed the Buckeye Trail before it became a loop trail are listed below:

The following hikers completed the 520-mile trail: 19?? - May 1975

Marion Pat Ellis (*Cleveland, OH*), Judy Gibson (*Columbus, OH*), Ellen Mumma (*Cutler, OH*), Helen Bowen (*Columbus, OH*)

The following hikers completed the 571-mile trail: Jan. 1975 – Nov. 1975

James Feeley (*Norcross, GA*), Frank & Miriam Cepp (*FL*), Louisa McDonough (*Cleveland, OH*), Donna Seither (*McCormell, PA*)

Jan. 1975 - April 1976

Gene DeSimone, Emily Gregor, Donald Howard, Wilma Howard, Kenneth Howard (13), Brian Howard (12), Jane Pendley (*Cleveland, OH*); Rachel Hartman (*Centerville, OH*); Helena Hart (*OH*); Victor Sandorf.

The following hikers completed the 658-mile trail. March 1977 – November 1978

Dan Springate, Garnet Springate, Jeannette Kozeny, Gene DeSimone (*Cleveland, OH*); Charles Briggs, Cecil Dobbins, Clifton Tate (*Akron, OH*); Lou Shainker.

There are many blanks that need to be filled in. If you know of individuals who have completed the trail or some information to fill in the blanks, please contact me at chuckhewett@yahoo.com or call 330-787-1463. Thank you to those individuals who have helped add a few names to the list. BTA is interested in people who have hiked the whole Trail. A patch is available for any hiker who has completed the entire Buckeye Trail. After finishing the Buckeye Trail, fill out a questionnaire and a patch will be sent to you in 10 business days. The first patch is FREE; any extra patches are \$3 each. The questionnaire can be found at: <https://buckeyetrail.org/circuit.php> Find the link for the form, download, fill it out and mail it (info below). The plaque can be ordered with your own personal information. The necessary information can be seen below:

Names (and trail names if applicable), thru-hike or section hike, and time of period hiked.

The plaque may be purchased for \$60 payable to Chuck Hewett. All profits (\$20) go to the BTA. [\$35 to trophy shop in Salem, Ohio and \$5 to mail the plaque]

Mail the information to:

Hewett
6734 Lakeview Road
Hanoverton, Ohio 44423
(Or email at chuckhewett@yahoo.com)

2023 Schedule of Hikes & Events

Always check [buckeyetrail.org/events.php](https://www.buckeyetrail.org/events.php) for more information and last-minute updates, and to register for the work parties and the chuckwagon meals

SEPTEMBER

September 22 —24, 2023

Fall Mushroom Camp

The BTA's Fall Mushroom Camp will be held at the BTA Beall Farmstead on the shore of Tappan Lake near Deersville OH. Join us for a weekend of hiking, music, food, camping, and mushrooms! Our hike leaders may take small groups to areas away from the Beall Farmstead to other Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District Lakes. Carpooling is recommended.

Meals: Bring your own food for Friday evening and lunch on Saturday. Deersville General Store will have food available for order throughout the weekend and delivery may be available for larger orders. There will be a Saturday Potluck at 6:15pm. Please bring something to share; refrigerators and electric for crock pots are available. BRING your own water for the weekend.

Camping: Sites for camping are in the area outside the BTA Barn. There are approximately 50 tent sites and 10 RV/Camper sites available for the weekend. Pets are permitted but must be leashed at all times. Be sure to bring bug spray.

Music: Eds Acoustic Thing begins at 7:30pm on Saturday, Sept. 23.

Other activities: kayaking will be done on Friday and Saturday nights. Bring your own kayak with a night-light.

Registration: Registration is required for this event. BTA members get a reduced rate. Children under the age of 18 are free and must be accompanied by a parent.

<https://app.etapestry.com/onlineforms/BuckeyeTrailAssociationInc/MushroomCamp2023.html>

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.

Go to [buckeyetrail.org/LittleLoopChallenge.php](https://www.buckeyetrail.org/LittleLoopChallenge.php) for more information and for the registration links.

Contact: littleloop@buckeyetrail.org

September 23-24, 2023

Buckeye Trail Circuit Hike - Burton & Mogadore Sections

Saturday: Meet 8:30AM at the Goodell Family Farm located at 10220 Peck Road, Mantua Ohio. Parking will be in a spot designated by the land owner near a Barn. 41.269586, -81.206881. Car pool to Reign Hadsell Park in Hiram Ohio, 41.311349, -81.148621. Hike distance according to the Farout App is 9.3 miles. Saturday's hike will be part of the Little Loop Challenge.

Sunday: Meet at 8:30AM at The BT trail head on Knapp Road 41.144471, -81.181929. Parking will be in the grass along the road. Carpool to at the Goodell Family Farm located at 10220 Peck Road,

Mantua Ohio. Parking will be in a spot designated by the land owner near a Barn. 41.269586, -81.206881. Hike distance according to the Farout App is about 12 miles.

Meetup: <https://www.meetup.com/buckeye-trail-circuit-hike/events/295492201/>

OCTOBER

October 2-5, 2023

Muskingum Lakes Chapter - Beall Farmstead Work Party, 4 days Bowerston Section

We are calling for volunteers to come build a new trail around Tappan Lake that will connect the BTA Barn at the Beall Farmstead to the Tappan Lake entrance! The Student Conservation Corps will also be out building the connector trail. Please register for this work party in advance to ensure that we have enough interest to host BTA volunteers. The house will be open for water and restrooms.

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, but will have access to the kitchen facilities in the house.

Camping: Beall Farmstead, primitive camping

Sign Up: bit.ly/3DhJqVR

Contact: jon.flinn@buckeyetrail.org

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 14-15, 2023

Buckeye Trail Circuit Hike - Loveland Section

Saturday: Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Milford trail head for the Little Miami Scenic trail. 39.171307 -84.299624. We will carpool to Loveland Point 1, Eden Park Overlook on Lake Drive, 39.118050 -84.486203. Hike distance is about 14 miles.

Sunday: Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Foster's crossing lot on Old 3#C Highway 39.322133 -84.251348. We will carpool to the Milford trail head for the Little Miami Scenic trail. 39.171307 -84.299624. Hike is about 13 miles.

Meetup: <https://www.meetup.com/buckeye-trail-circuit-hike/events/295732228/>

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. We will leave for the work site at 8:00AM.

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

October 23-26, 2023

Muskingum Lakes Chapter - Beall Farmstead Work Party, 4 days - Bowerston Section

We are calling for volunteers to come build a new trail around Tappan Lake that will connect the BTA Barn at the Beall Farmstead to the Tappan Lake entrance! The Student Conservation Corps will also be out building the connector trail. Please register for this work party in advance to ensure that we have enough interest to host BTA volunteers. The house will be open for water and restrooms.

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, but will have access to the kitchen facilities in the house.

Camping: Beall Farmstead, primitive camping

Sign Up: bit.ly/3DhJqVR

Contact: jon.flinn@buckeyetrail.org

N O V E M B E R

November 4, 2023

BTA Board Meeting

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

November 11-12, 2023

Buckeye Trail Circuit Hike - Loveland Section

Saturday: Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Little Miami Scenic trail head in Morrow near Point 15. 39.354747 -84.133935. We will carpool to Foster's crossing lot on Old #C Highway 39.322133 -84.251348 Hike is about 9.3 miles.

Sunday: Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Little Miami Scenic trail head in Oregonia 39.452627 -84.096905 We will carpool to the Little Miami Scenic trail head in Morrow near Point 15. 39.354747 -84.133935 Hike is about 8.6 miles.

Meetup: <https://www.meetup.com/buckeye-trail-circuit-hike/events/295732382/>

D E C E M B E R

December 9-10, 2023

Buckeye Trail Circuit Hike - Loveland and Caesar Creek Sections

Destination to be determined. More details to follow:

<https://www.meetup.com/buckeye-trail-circuit-hike/>



Adams COUNTY, OH



Hike the Buckeye Trail
in Adams County
adamscountytravel.org

Travel & Visitors Bureau

OTHER BTA EVENTS

To stay up-to-date on Chapter specific events, go to:
<https://www.meetup.com/pro/buckeyetrail/>

Chapters post their regular meetings, Chapter-led hikes and work parties, and more to their respective Meetup pages.

You can find your Chapter in the Meetup link provided above and/or go to <https://buckeyetrail.org/chapters.php> for more information.

Buckeye Trail Association

P.O. Box 5
Shawnee, Ohio 43782

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You can also scan the
QR code to get to the
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our website!



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P.O. BOX 5, SHAWNEE, OHIO 43782

OR JOIN ONLINE AT:

www.buckeyetrail.org/membership.php