

BUCKEYE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Trailblazer



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Editor's Note

Life member, Donald Mong passed away on September 12, 2023. He was a longtime trail builder with many hours at AEP Recreation land and other trail crew adventures. He is remembered for his work at the BT barn during its initial conversion from "just a barn" to "a remarkable meeting space". Too bad the crew never succeeded in removing the bats, but Don's dog was single handedly responsible for clearing the ground hogs from under the barn.

Meet our 2023 Scholarship Recipient: Sophie Huss

Sophie's love of the outdoors began at a young age during family camping trips to Hocking Hills. Her passion for protecting natural places for fellow beings and future generations led her to pursue a B.S. in geology and anthropology. While completing her degree at the University of Toledo, Sophie worked for Metroparks Toledo as an environmental education and cultural programmer and volunteered with Boy Scouts of America as a merit badge counselor in environmental science, sustainability, archaeology, and geology.

She is now a third-year Geology PhD student at Michigan State University where she is co-conducting research with diverse stakeholders to build capacity for ethical engagement between government entities, communities, and engineers/Earth scientists in resource extractive spaces. She holds a graduate certificate in post-secondary teaching and learning, and is working toward certificates in Indigenous studies, museum studies, and community engagement. Alongside her research and coursework, Sophie also enjoys volunteering as a Thriving Earth Exchange Community Science Fellow.



As a lifelong Ohio resident, she was thrilled to discover the Buckeye Trail community and has since gotten involved in advocacy efforts with the BTA. Sophie hopes her work can contribute to a better world one "step" at a time. If you, or someone you know, would like to know more about the BTA Academic Scholarship, please visit our website for more information: buckeyetrail.org/scholarship.php



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Cover photo: Winter Hike on the
Perimeter Trail in Caesar Creek
State Park
Photo credit: Dayton Hikers

Buckeye Trail Association

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Why Does My Family Donate To The Buckeye Trail Association?

*Heather Stehle, BTA Board Member,
Little Cities of the Forest Chapter*

Boots, packs, snacks...this is how my list starts any time we head out of the house and onto the trail. This probably sounds familiar to you too. But what else do I think about? I think about how lucky we are to live in a place where we can hike on the Buckeye Trail to experience varied landscapes and visit different towns. The Buckeye Trail offers views from Appalachian woodlands to colorful prairies to fields of crops as far as the eye can see. Welcoming Trail Towns and communities offer us camping or lodging all while sampling ice cream and brews with names like Buckeye Krunch and Buckeye Trail Hazy Pale Ale. We are drawn to the instant connections we have with other BTA members whether it's during an event or a work party, all connected by a love of hiking. For all of these reasons and more, we became Life Household members several years ago and we are so happy we did. There are hikes, events, work parties, and volunteer opportunities for everyone. The varied contributions made by the BTA's volunteers, staff, and AmeriCorps service members truly keep us all hiking our own hike.

During the 2017 Trailfest at Camp Widewater, the children in attendance were inspired to make BTA artwork in the form of refrigerator magnets, small paintings, and miniature blue blazes. BTA members stepped up and gave donations in exchange for the items. The donations provided were enough to buy a new Pulaski for BTA volunteers to use. Those trail kids were very proud of their accomplishment! This experience opened up an ongoing dialogue with my boys about sharing our gifts with others.

There are many philosophies out there regarding philanthropic giving. There is one that resonates with me as a BTA Board member and it states that when you are beginning to think about serving on a Board, you consider the gifts of your extra time, effort, and donations that fit your budget. My boys and I discussed it and we decided that by sharing our gifts with one organization, in this case the BTA, we are making a big impact. The Blue Blazes Society offers a goal for my family's giving each year of \$500 or more. We meet this goal by donating a set amount monthly...and automatically! If this is something you'd like to check out, choose the monthly option when donating online with your credit card.



The boys at Camp Widewater where the initial fundraising art sale got its start. Photo credit: Heather Stehle.

President's Message

Steve Walker

I hope that you're all safe and sound and happy. Even though the holiday season is still close in the rearview mirror, the business of the Buckeye Trail has been going on in the background. At least four committees met in December of 2023 to help your favorite trail organization get ready for 2024.

One committee that doesn't ordinarily have as much to do at this time of the year has been quite busy getting ready for the new year as well. This small committee has been merrily working on their tasks quietly for over two years and definitely has something to show for it. Led by Kim Love-Ottobre, the BTA Trail Town Committee (mainly her and two other BTA members) has helped five Ohio communities along the Buckeye Trail become Buckeye Trail Towns since October of 2021. Fort Loramie in the St. Marys Section became the newest Buckeye Trail Town this past September bringing the total to twenty. Chartering five Buckeye Trail Towns on the roster in less than two years is some impressive work for one of our shortest staffed BTA committees. If you want to help Kim with this important work, contact her at trailtown@buckeyetrail.org.

The Buckeye Trail Town Program began over a decade ago with Milford, Ohio which is at the confluence of the Loveland and Williamsburg Sections of the Buckeye Trail. Averaging one or two a year got us to fifteen by 2021. Once in a while, a Buckeye Trail Town Celebration is tied to TrailFest like it was in 2016 in Zoar in the Massillon Section, Yellow Springs in 2017 in the Caesar Creek Section and Napoleon in 2019 in the Defiance Section.

Buckeye Trail Towns figured strongly into the current Strategic Plan which was implemented on January 1, 2020. Goal 1b (Marketing) called for having twenty-five Buckeye Trail Towns designated by the end of 2025 and we're four-fifths of the way there. To get to that goal, the Trail Town Committee is currently looking at four Ohio communities as possible candidates. One of the other actions called for in Goal 1b was re-establishing contact with all Buckeye Trail Towns. To that end, three Buckeye Trail Town Summits were hosted by Kim in February of 2023.

Even bigger things are in the works by the Trail Town Committee. Our decade-old effort to designate Buckeye Trail Towns caught the attention of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources back in 2018 when they were in the process of developing their 2019 Ohio Trails Vision. That trail plan recommended that the State of Ohio "Establish an Ohio Trails Town program that provides a process for recognition and guidelines for best management practices for recognition of communities that support world-class trails and provide resources to people interested in exploring new business opportunities catering to trail users."

The bigger world will have an opportunity to find out more about Ohio Trail Towns, and particularly Buckeye Trail Towns at the upcoming 2024 Adventure Summit that takes place in the Wright State University Student Union in Dayton, Ohio on Friday, February 9, 2024 and Saturday, February 10, 2024. The Buckeye Trail Association, with its own program of Buckeye Trail Towns, is hosting and developing an agenda for Saturday afternoon. The target audience for this series of presentations and panel discussion

are trails enthusiasts and their organizations and will include current trail towns and potential trail towns.

Developing the Buckeye Trail Town Program is just one of many ways to market our favorite trail and trail organization. We'll keep you posted on our developing Trail Towns so keep an eye out in 2024. Have a great Winter.

Steve Walker
president@buckeyetrail.org



Kim Love-Ottobre at St. Marys Trail Town Celebration, October 17, 2021. Photo credit: Steve Walker.

On the Trail...

It is the end of another successful, busy, and productive year for Ohio's Buckeye Trail (BT). The Buckeye Trail Association (BTA) continues to grow into our role as a leader in the state of Ohio, even though our growth can be uneven at times, sometimes even uncomfortable, as we find and create both the funding and human resources, we need to achieve the ambitious vision of Ohio's Buckeye Trail.

We are growing into our larger trail project developer role, while developing strategies on how we best leverage the excitement about big projects into increased volunteerism, membership, and enjoyment of the Buckeye Trail experience to sustain the BTA for years after the projects are completed.

We are growing our base of organized volunteer interest groups, like our 10 BTA Chapters, our Trail Management Team leadership, our volunteers interested in engaging Ohio's youth, Buckeye Trail Angels happily helping hikers along the BT, and Buckeye Trail Towns gathering at our Ohio Trail Town Summit on February 10, 2024. Our statewide trail advocacy volunteers are learning and growing in their effectiveness, sharing the story of the BT with elected officials, and working with the Ohio Trails Partnership to develop trail maintenance and development resources for tomorrow's BT. In most cases BTA volunteers are leading BTA volunteers, supported by BTA staff and decades long partners.

We are growing into a better and more comprehensive volunteer program with improved training and education through programs like our Blue Blaze Academy, Chainsawyer and swamper training, increased emphasis and adoption of safety protocol, personal protective equipment, CPR/First Aid and Wilderness First Aid trainings. We're growing our skillsets, providing more materials, tools, and equipment with an eye on conducting our work safely while empowering volunteers to make the improvements to the BTA and the Buckeye Trail experience we all know we need.

With all our growth your BTA staff and BTA Trustees have invested extra time to pour over budget management and background systems to better prepare for audits, to be more transparent, and to retain the increased participation in BTA special events and volunteer work parties we have witnessed this year.

It has been a lot! And BTA members like you should be proud of what your investment is creating around Ohio. There is so much more to tackle in the year ahead, so many aspects of the BTA that we can continually improve upon as well, and for that work we all are so grateful for your continued support of such a



great idea as the Buckeye Trail.

One thing that I like to keep in mind through the sometimes tedious, frustrating, challenges of growth is the fun factor of the BT. Why are we doing any of this anyway? The answer makes it all worthwhile: so people can enjoy hiking an awe inspiring Buckeye Trail experience, and all the benefits that brings to them. I hope that as a day hiker or long distance backpacker, a trail runner, a birder, a camper, or any other mode you choose to enjoy the BT, you appreciate that when you share your BT experience with others in person or through social media you appreciate that hundreds of BTA volunteers, staff, and partners can finally see the fruit of their labors in your enjoyment of the BT and it makes it all the hard work and time spent worthwhile.

We hope you have had a great year out on the trail, and hope your new year is filled with new miles around the state on the BT! Thank you for Hiking!

Andrew Bashaw
Executive Director
Buckeye Trail Association

Photo credit: Jean Vandervaart

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.

AUGUST 2, 2023 TO NOVEMBER 1, 2023

GENERAL FUND

Adams County Travel and Visitor's Bureau
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 Dale Vest
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IN CELEBRATION OF THE WEDDING OF JONAH GRABELKSY & MARTHA ALLEE

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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.

Fort Loramie Students Learn to Follow the Blue Blazes

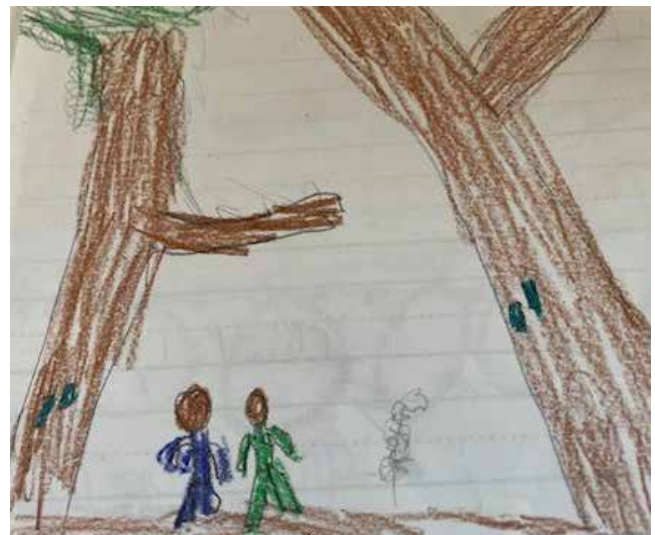
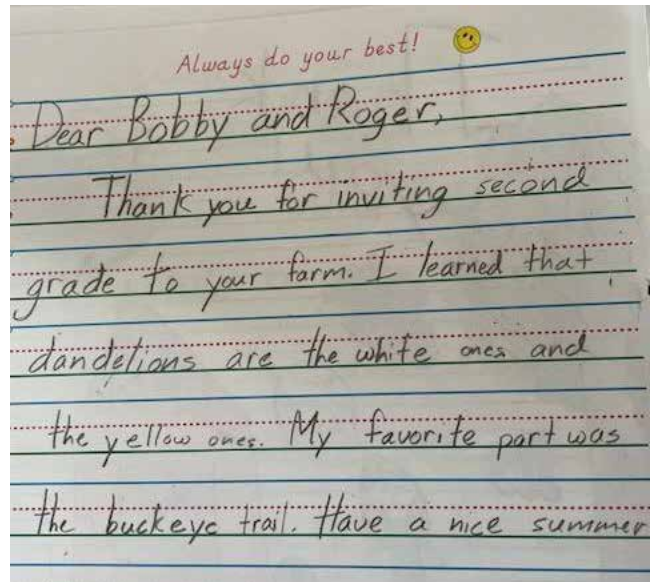
Kim Love-Ottobre

The second-grade students at Fort Loramie Elementary School have one final lesson before the end of the school year. Each year, the students are invited to the Bender Farm to visit, and learn about farm life and the Buckeye Trail. Bobby Bender, a lifetime member of the BTA began the activity of teaching children how to follow the Buckeye Trail blazes about 20 years ago while living in Columbus. The ability of recognizing and knowing how to follow a trail blaze is a new skill to many people which Bobby enjoyed sharing with others.

When the Benders moved into the Fort Loramie area, they asked the school principal if any teachers would like to bring their students on a free field trip to the Farm. This opportunity opened up after Ohio passed an agritourism immunity law stating a farm could not be held liable for injury while visiting the farm for education. The second-grade teachers were happy for the chance for the children to learn while on a field trip.

Bobby has used both blue chalk and blue painter's tape to create blazes on their territory. Students learn what blazes are and how hikers follow them. Straight-ahead blazes, left-hand turn blazes, and right-hand turn blazes are all part of the fun as they follow the "Buckeye Trail" around the Bender Farm. The trail starts on a poke in the pasture, through the yard and tire swing, to the barnyard and barn. The next stop is the vegetable garden, following a grass lane into the woods and following the trail through the woods. Bobby does blaze a horizontal blue mark at the end of her trail as the stopping point on a huge downed log.

The students also visit the farm animals: goats, steers, chickens, cats, and dogs. The second-grade teachers have each child write a thank-you note to the Farm and many include a picture of their adventure following the Blue Blazes.



Photographs of the letters children drew and wrote to thank Bobby and the Bender family for their time. Credit goes to the students from the Fort Loramie Elementary School.

Tag & Tor

~ Karen Power
& Jeri Getts



The art of the Yogi

yogi /yō-gē/ v. [Mod.E< Yogi Bear, the Hanna-Barbera cartoon character who attempted picnic basket escapes at Jellystone Park.] 1. to ask for a favor without directly asking --vt 2. A request made by yogi-ing. --n

The day Tag and Tor “misplaced” Tor’s car on the BT (see Trailblazer Summer 2020), they needed a ride. How do 2 strangers stranded on a sparsely populated country road ask another stranger a ride? Try these steps for a successful yogi:

1. Spot a possible trail angel. This unsuspecting person probably doesn’t know what a trail angel is or does. Our trail angel was checking his mailbox at the end of his driveway.
2. Approach the trail angel in a non-intimidating way. Start the conversation by asking a question: “Is there a taxi service in this area?”
3. Establish rapport. Spend a few minutes chatting about the Buckeye Trail and shuttles. Bring the conversation around to the problem: “We accidentally parked our car 8 miles away.”
4. Wait for the offer. Don’t put the trail angel on the spot by asking directly. An indirect request gives the trail angel a way to graciously refuse. The key component to the art of the yogi is to let the offer for assistance originate with the trail angel: “I could give you a ride!”
5. Be grateful. Offer to pay or return the favor in some way. Tag and Tor’s trail angel wouldn’t take gas money, so they later gifted him with a BT sweatshirt.

Keep in mind that there are no formal rules on trail etiquette. The art of the Yogi is best learned by doing. Happy Hiking!



Adams COUNTY, OH



Hike the Buckeye Trail
in Adams County
adamscountytourism.org

Travel & Visitors Bureau



My husband Joe and I had the recent privilege of hosting NCT thru-hiker Bernie Krause for four nights of his journey while in Western Ohio on the Buckeye Trail. Shortly after dropping him off in Troy and sending him on his way north towards Michigan he posted a sweet story about a conversation with a mouse he had while settling in for the night in the Eagle Scout Cole Shelter, which is located in the St. Mary's section on the BT. Bernie wrote, "As I ready for bed, I hear rustling as if leaves are being crunched in the wall. I walk over to investigate a beam at the shelters entryway and there's a mouse staring eye to eye with me as she prepares her nest for the freezing night ahead. If you could live with me then I could live with you."

The cute interaction inspired me to draw this cartoon.

~ Jeri Getts

Bernie Krause, 57, is a two time Triple Crown hiker who recently hiked through Ohio on the part of the Buckeye Trail that runs concurrently with North Country National Scenic Trail. Over the course of his life, he has hiked 41,000 miles. On pages 10 to 12, you can find his long form poem narrating his westward journey of the North Country Trail.

Right: Selfie of Bernie Krause on the Buckeye Trail. Credit goes to Bernie.



Seeing Beauty through the Buck's Eye

Bernie Krausse

I am Home on the Range and my backpack is where my Heart is. It's the entrance to my Soul with the desire to become the great wide open. No more business as usual. Every red carpet step has a welcome sign both above and below me. I am immersed in Abundance. True Nature is my companion. It surrounds me and funnels through my heart into my very soul to fuel my epic quest. It spirits me across the land as if the winds of fate were sailing this human vessel across the heavens into uncharted territory. I am following a 4,800 mile line on a map, and yet I am in an undiscovered country. I am alone and yet I am connected to everything. I am the only thru-hiker. No one can possibly follow the same path and yet we all share a common destiny.

The north star guides me, and yet, a hidden southern cross below the horizon is grabbing my attention to hoist its presence upon an unfixed skyscape. I stroll through the clouds aching a ceaseless Rorschach test finding meaning from the fluff of all that is reformed. The soles of my feet are walking on starshine. Infinite potential is before me because the finite has become oblivious. I am sacrificing the mundane to resurrect the sublime. I am leaving behind a world of details to paint rainbows over imaginary lines.

The North Country Trail is my walk in through the out door. I am navigating to encompass an ever growing understanding of what Home truly means to me. My safe haven travels with

me to smooth out the turbulence of chaos and uncertainty. Every waypoint is a round trip ticket, whose destination is in the totality of my being.

My higher self heroic journey begins in North Dakota eastbound on May 15th. Wilderness and human agriculture are seeking a common ground. Ticks and mosquitoes are the conquistadors of a disputed land. Am I at war with those that are not consciously invited? Minnesota and her boundary waters are babbling that all membranes are permeable even without visas. Wisconsin and Upper Michigan whisper that Superior loses its position and status when all moments are equally qualitative. By mid August, trials and tribulations have made a check mark upon the ego to un-define the worst of times into the sheer magic of the best of times. I flip polarities and my movement from the epicenter of the National Scenic Trail near Lowell, Michigan. It both transports and transmutes the very sense of who I am to the eastern frontier in Vermont with the Appalachian and Long Trails.



Top: Sunrise near Vialles Lock, Bottom Left: Wolf Run Lake, Bottom Right: South of Spencerville. Photo credit: Bernie Krausse



Bridge at Eastwood Metro Park. Photo credit: Bernie Krausse

Switching directions, I find myself converting miles walked into time dissolved. Eternity emerges from the cracks where the tale of two trailheads collapses in upon themselves to reveal my very own version of Shamballa or Shangri-La. I cruise across New York whose wake raises yet another New to the Old World that is being decommissioned behind me. Pennsylvania has me whitening out outdated proclamations to enjoy the woods beyond the notion of ownership. Instead, we each become stewards of true nature when we can reflect upon beauty as our richest resource. This perhaps is the greatest act of selfless restoration where egoic signatures are erased to reveal the true untamed spirit of the forest.

However, it is O-hi-O, that has my mind, body, and spirit limber at feeling at Home in this fully embodied stretch. The Buckeye Trail is my personal Good Luck Charm. Her 1,400 mile loop around the state is a golden crowning achievement that sparks excitement from its connectivity with communities. It is a caldera or sync-whole of erupting creativity that celebrates the best of both natural and human history. Its kingdom includes all at the expense of none. Trail Angels throughout the land are the gatekeepers of adventure as front row cheerleaders to ever expanding change. Quantum leaps jump into my mind when I walk in stillness. The trail beyond boundaries is a growth ring when one decides to engage

with one's passionate nature, whose life force is circulating freely in a collective vision brimming with appreciation and gratitude.

Here and Now is where the North holds hands with the South to shake up a misunderstood past into a perpetually unfolding restful future. Monumental Towpaths unlock divisions through free trade. Ancient inland seas bring fresh and innovative new seasoning to the salt of the earth. A gulf between two worlds is being spanned by channeling the natural flow of prosperity for all.

Treading lightly southbound, I hug the shores of reservoirs whose autumn splendor is decorating mother nature for the holidays. Positive reflections splash color upon lakes like living wreaths that become windows pouring intoxicating spirit into evolving landscapes. My body flushes like a mood ring transforming empathy into compassion upon completing the Wilderness Loop. Appalachia has me rising to fill the shoes of Big Foot as a conscious Guardian of my very own inner earth.

In Athens, my providence is no longer Greek to me. The gods enjoy watching me near my peak performance as I summit my very own Olympics. Being true to my inner feelings sports the best reality show. Friendships boarded upon last year's American Discovery Trail from sea to shining sea continue to

bon voyage me forwards into the sunset where my memories live on in the presence of happily ever after.

Unity is contagious. Mason and Dixon are now the best of friends as there are no more lines or time zones to cross. Together they let go of playing tug of war to row their boat gently down the Ohio River stream of conscious awareness. They take turns stroking left and right until wrong simply sinks, raising that which is Titanic.

I meander unknowingly into Shawnee for an Indigenous and dignified celebration of community ethos where any remaining hiker trash within me is recycled into an All American Peace Pilgrim. My walkathon has no beginning or ending and yet returns any dividends to an infinite trust fund.

Spontaneity gives birth to surprise parties whose invitations are dust in the wind blowing me inwards into guest rooms where strangers lose their definitions, revealing that we are all family when kindred.

Slack packing offers me the wake from Angel's wings that fan my passion to realize an ever-present glory. Junk food is finally digested in preparation for an ongoing gourmet buffet. All-you-can-eat is an epicurean feast where all I sense and encounter is in the recipe. Success stirs everything upon the trail of life together as key ingredients. Love is unlocked as the essence of Good Taste.

I find my stride when I myself am an open mobile lean-to that is my shelter from any storm. In Milford, the stars align to lasso Polaris into the center of my very own Crux. All divergence reconverges as every trail returns directionless home. My compass points both up and down as my newest pillar of Truth to follow and align with.

Embracing death resurrects life out from its shadows. Emptiness orchestrates fullness into a harmonic symphony. I am all aboard on rail trails as a peace train whose whistle is a silencer to chugging. I am a barge whose cargo is the building blocks to Aqueducts keeping the country even-keeled with the city. Holy Toledo wishes me continued excitement to fare well in Michigan on this sacred quest of perpetual new beginnings. Joy knows a blank state of no-mind.

Those who know the Buckeye Spirit have the wisdom to see clearly that hunting season is the search for the wild that has gone missing. One wanders to aim and target the lost out of the box back into found.

In less than six months I have come full circle to find my home at the end of time between the ticks and the tock. I am both giving and receiving birth at the end of a very long dark tunnel.

The gift of knowing Grand Scenic Overviews has me rediscovering amazement as the neutral Swiss cheese above the patriotic maze. Red and blue find calm and order by knowing they are equally born from white light. The Harvest is in. All is golden when the static from resistance unwinds an ageless epoch of Soulshine.

My way home flashes brightly in an instant like lightning that roars without thunder. My long walk upon the North Country Trail has sewn heaven and earth back into One. Humpty Dumpty can be put back together again. At the very Heart of Creation and Intention, I will always remember where and how to truly Live my dream that is always unfolding as True.

Top: Miami and Erie Canal north of Saint Mary's.

Bottom: The National Road north of Dayton

Photo credit: Bernie Krause



JOIN THE BATTLE. BEAT THE BUG.

STOP THE SPREAD OF THE SPOTTED LANTERNFLY.

CHECK YOUR VEHICLE

Search for all spotted lanternfly life stages



Egg mass
Sept.-June



Early nymph
April-July



Late nymph
July-Sept.



Adult
July-Dec.

SCRAPE. SQUASH. REPORT.



Scrape
egg masses into a
container of rubbing
alcohol or hand sanitizer



Squash
any bugs
you see

**Contact your
State Department of
Agriculture**

Report
any sightings



Get more information at aphis.usda.gov/hungrypests/slfbiz

Snapshots on the Trail



Hikerbabes Community: Northeast Ohio Chapter.

The photo was taken at Richfield Heritage Preserve this July where we had our wedding. After the ceremony, we were getting photos taken at various spots and happened to walk by a post with a blaze. I stopped and made the photographer take a picture because my husband and I both love hiking! We often hike sections of the Buckeye Trail as we are exploring various parks in Ohio.

~ Julie Michael



The photo to the left was taken during Biggest Day Hike 2023 by Ash D. Pierce with Girls Who Hike Ohio.

“Our mission at Girls Who Hike Ohio is to create a community of like-minded women who can connect, network, and discover together through our Ohio trails. Hiking meetups, current trail updates, and more all through our closed Facebook group! We pre-screen every group member in order to ensure a safe space for our members to connect openly.”

facebook.com/groups/girlswhohikeoh/
instagram: [@girls_who_hike_ohio](https://instagram.com/girls_who_hike_ohio)



Burton Section pt 25 Rapids Road rerout work party. It was nice to be involved with the other volunteers as they were very enthusiastic about improving the BT. Hope to see you on the trail and volunteering next year.

~ *Dave Hamm*

You're Invited to a Buckeye Trail Winter Hike with the Dayton Hikers!



Frozen Horseshoe Falls at Caesar Creek State Park. Photo credit: Todd Nystrom.

Kick off the season of winter hikes with a trek on the blue blazes in southwest Ohio. You are invited to the Buckeye Trail Winter Hike and Potluck Feast on Saturday, January 6, 2024 at Caesar Creek State Park. Hosted by Dayton Hikers since 2013, this event is the premiere winter hike on the Buckeye Trail in southwest Ohio. Five guided hikes are offered ranging from three to twelve miles. All hikes are the Buckeye Trail. Afterwards, join us for a potluck feast inside the visitor center at Caesar Creek. Bring a dish to share. For more information and to sign up visit: <https://bit.ly/bt-winterhike>.

Climb Rocks, Soak in Nature, Solve Bigfoot escape puzzles.

Steve and Becky Roley, owners at High Rock Adventures

Whether it's heart-pounding thrills, a peaceful nature tour, or a fun Bigfoot escape room challenge, High Rock Adventures has an experience just for you!

High Rock Adventure tours take place on beautiful, pristine private property just 3.5 miles from the Buckeye Trail parking at US 33 & SR 180 in the Hocking Hills. You're sure to enjoy the natural forest and sandstone cliffs while making incredible memories on any one of our outdoor adventure tours. If weather is an issue or you love escape rooms and Bigfoot, step inside the Attic Adventure for a fun and challenging experience. With High Rock Adventures & Hocking Hills Ecotours you can choose between several awesome fully-guided tours: Rappelling, Rock Climbing, the unique Rock Challenge Tour, a fun and educational Eco/Nature Tour, in-depth Edible Medicinal Plant tour, or Nature Therapy for a deep connection to the forest. On all tours you'll be led by experienced guides and all equipment is provided. The tours typically last 2.5 to 3 hours. The Rock Challenge Express was designed for those on a tighter schedule at 1.5 to 2 hours.

Looking for high excitement? Try the Rappelling Adventure! No waiting on crowds or tying into trees, High Rock operates on gorgeous private property showcasing amazing cliffs and rock features, utilizing state-of-the-art Petzl stainless steel anchoring systems. This tour is a great blend of nature and adrenaline! Rappelling is less physically demanding than rock climbing but doesn't sacrifice any excitement. All gear and instruction are provided, no experience necessary.

Seeking to really challenge yourself? Try Rock Climbing at High Rock, home to beautiful natural sandstone cliffs and rocks with climbing routes for all skill levels. You'll be using a top rope system and belayed safely by an experienced guide. This tour provides three unique climbs with difficulty based on the group's abilities. Rock Climbing is the most physically challenging of all tours offered, but High Rock guides will instruct and encourage you every step of the way!

Want a great group adventure that stays a little closer to the ground? You'll love the Rock Challenge Tour or the Rock Challenge Express with a variety of rock canyons, squeezes, scrambles, crawls, and rope-assisted bouldering challenges. This is a fast-moving tour, perfect for larger groups or families. The rock obstacles are achievable by most and you are welcome to opt out of a particular challenge if you're not comfortable. There is nothing like this tour in the Hocking Hills!

Do you love nature and want to learn more about the flora and fauna of the Hocking Hills? Slow things down a bit and enjoy the Natural High tour. On this fully-guided nature hike you will be immersed in our fern-covered, mature forest while learning about area geology, history, and the many unique plants and majestic trees. You'll

be invited to experience 2 of the easier rock challenges on this tour as an option. For even more plant education, you'll want to take the Edible and Medicinal Plants tour. Have fun tasting, smelling, and learning about many different plants and trees. Several of the plants will change throughout the year so the tour will be unique to the season. Bring a notebook, camera, and your sense of adventure! To truly relax, find tranquility as you awaken to the healing power of the forest with the Nature Therapy Experience. Based on the



ancient practice of forest bathing, you will be immersed in the forest itself through a meditative walk in the serene woods of Cool Rock Valley. Along the path, you will be invited to connect with nature through guided activities designed to bring awareness to the present moment.

Looking for Bigfoot or a fun, engaging indoor experience? You'll love the Attic Adventure where you hear from an avid Sasquatch researcher who is on the run and can't return to her attic apartment. She needs your help retrieving three important items but her secrets must be protected! There's no telling what you'll uncover with a variety of challenging puzzles and unlimited clues.

Be sure to stop in our incredible Hocking Hills Rocks gift shop featuring an array of gorgeous rocks and gems, plus High Rock and Hocking Hills merchandise, located in the High Rock Adventures office cabin at 10108 Opossum Hollow Rd, Rockbridge, Ohio. Go to www.highrockadventures.com to reserve your perfect Hocking Hills Adventure!



At High Rock Adventures-Hocking Hills Ecotours we engage outdoor enthusiasts and nature lovers in Ecotourism, Adventure Challenge Tours, Natural Rock Climbing, Rappelling, and Outdoor Education. Our goal is to have fun while sustainably immersing our guests in the outdoor world and instilling in them a lasting and meaningful respect and appreciation for the natural environment. We do these things while working to protect and conserve the awe inspiring Hocking Hills Region.

AMAZING PRIVATE PROPERTY just 5 minutes from the Buckeye Trailhead!

Find us:   



Whether you're a THRILL-SEEKER or a NATURE LOVER seeking a peaceful escape, High Rock Adventures has something for everyone!



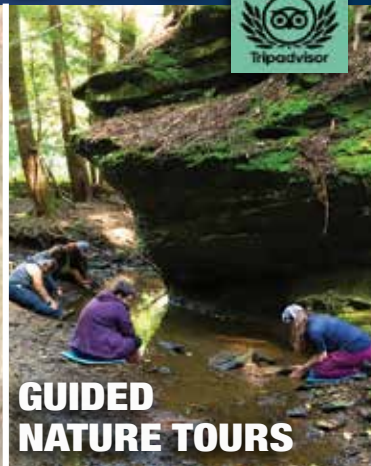
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highrockadventures.com

On the Trail:

The Crash of the Shenandoah

Jonathan Winkler

You never know what you're going to find on the trail is both a caution and a motivation. Few know that the Buckeye Trail includes a point that commemorates the only wreck of a U.S. Navy warship on dry land. For those hikers familiar with the Belle Valley section, the trail itself reaches a small park a quarter mile past Point 22 (Cooper Road at State Route 146) along Shenandoah Road (T112). Here we see "one of the sites where pieces of the fated dirigible USS Shenandoah fell to earth" on September 3, 1925. One rests in the grass, addresses a blister, eats some food, and then ponders the displays and learns of a world now gone. I know my hiking partner had never heard of it before the day we stopped on the trail.

The USS Shenandoah (ZR-1) was a path in the history of naval and aviation technology that did not pan out. The U.S. Navy had begun to experiment with blimps and airships during World War I, as did Germany, Great Britain and other powers. Following the war, a captured German Zeppelin became the model for the first rigid airship (meaning metal frame with bags of lifting gas like helium) designed and built by the United States Navy. These ships' purpose was to provide long-range scouting for the fleet, a role that would later be taken over by fixed-wing aircraft and radar. Between the world wars, the Navy worked with four of these monsters (600 to 700 feet long) to figure out if this could solve the difficult problem of spotting the enemy fleet first before a battle. A fifth rigid airship crashed before the British could deliver her. The others were the USS Los Angeles (ZR-3), Akron (ZRS-4), and Macon (ZRS-

5). Only the Los Angeles was not lost in a wreck. In World War II, the United States relied upon blimps rather than rigid airships for convoy protection and submarine spotting. Rigid airships are gone, but blimps still remain.

Launched on September 3 and commissioned on October 10, 1923, the Shenandoah was largely an experimental vessel with which the Navy could learn how this new, complex technological system might work and train officers for the other ships. During its almost two-year life, it carried out a number of firsts, including mooring to a ship underway at sea, and made public relations tours around the United States to showcase the Navy and this futuristic technology. Few today remember what these floating overhead would have been like—our only pop culture memory really remains the video of the Hindenburg crash, an image also preserved on Led Zeppelin's 1969 eponymous album cover. There's also that scene in the now-distant 1989 Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, where the heroes escape a Zeppelin in its attached biplane. That wasn't just a movie gimmick—the later Akron and Macon actually carried airplanes inside as rudimentary aircraft carriers.

What does this have to do with the Buckeye Trail? There are actually three crash sites for the Shenandoah. Someone pursuing the Buckeye Trail in sections will likely pass by all three in the course of staging and hiking but not realize what they are



or their connection. Site Number 1 is on the trail. Site Number 2 is along I-77, about 1200 feet southwest of Site Number 1. As you drive south on the highway, before one gets to the Belle Valley exit, it is there on the right-hand side with a large billboard and an American flag. There nothing to visit there, and it is on private land, but it helps to realize the size of the debris field from the wreck. The airship came down in three parts. The stone and brass federal monument originally built there in 1937 to commemorate the fourteen who lost their lives was relocated. It is now to the east side of Ohio 821 about 500 feet north of Ava, a five-minute drive up from Belle Valley so not far to go. Site Number 3 is the one that might catch most by surprise as they're staging for the Buckeye Trail. In the Stockport Section, those driving around for the off-road hike through the former AEP lands (especially through Point 2) will probably take Ohio 78 that runs from Caldwell to Reinersville. Three miles west of the village of Sharon, on the north side on a long curve, a monument pull-off suddenly appears. It looks like something important because it has space for cars and a flag, but you're rushing to get to the trail. It is worth a stop, especially if that's one's first exposure to this sad tale. Now you can link it to the other two sites.

There are two other Ohio connections to the Shenandoah. The officer in charge was Lt. Commander Zachary Lansdowne, a career officer who had been very involved in lighter-than-air work during and after the war. He was originally from Greenville, Ohio, and the Garst Museum there has an exhibit on him complete with relics from the crash site to commemorate this lost son. For those familiar with aviation history, Lansdowne and U.S. Army Col. William "Billy" Mitchell were good friends. Lansdowne's death in the Shenandoah triggered Mitchell's public accusation that senior Army and Navy leadership were incompetent on aviation matters, which prompted his famous court-martial.

The other is connected to the Mogadore Section. Those who have hiked that past Wingfoot Lake know that one goes right past the Goodyear Blimp operations center and hanger. There's another important facility just five miles to the west of that, visible along US 224 or from Interstate 77. This is the former Goodyear Airdock, at one time the largest building in the world without interior supports. Goodyear specially built it to construct the USS Akron and USS Macon, because those airships were so large (785 feet, longer than contemporary battleships). It is similar to the other giant airship hangers in the United States at Lakehurst, New Jersey, and Moffett Field, San Francisco. Once you've seen it, you will appreciate why it is so remarkable.

So Akron has the gigantic hanger specially constructed to build the rigid airships that were to be the next generation after the Shenandoah, which crashed in southeastern Ohio, and built by the company that operates blimps at another site along the trail. And all of this quite near the BT. Be sure to look for them—you'll kick yourself if after you travelled all that way you realized how close you were to it.

Jonathan Winkler (Feral Professor) is a Professor of U.S. military and foreign relations history at Wright State University in Dayton. As his hiking partners know, he does not lecture for free.

Photo from page 18: "Image copied from original owned by Robert Blackmore related to the crash of USS Shenandoah (ZR-1) on September 3, 1925."

Photos and captions from U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command. www.history.navy.mil



Crash Site Number 3 - "September 3, 1925. "Wreckage of Shenandoah's bow section on a southern Ohio farm soon after it crashed. Note sightseers and their automobiles."



Crash Site Number 2: "Wreckage of Shenandoah's after section, surrounded by sightseers and their automobiles, soon after the airship crashed in southern Ohio."



"Lansdowne, USN, Commanding Officer, USS Shenandoah. In the airship's control car, laying out a course. Photographed at Naval Air Station Lakehurst, New Jersey, June 1924."



The Wagner Subaru Outdoor Experience

Christopher Buck

Over 14,000 adventure enthusiasts descended on Eastwood MetroPark for The Wagner Subaru Outdoor Experience presented by Huffy on October 7th & 8th. This year's event featured a variety of activities, including climbing, mountain biking, disc golf, fishing, slacklining, paddling, cycling, pump track, ziplining, camping, and more. In addition to the activities, there were also exhibits from local businesses and organizations, live music, food trucks, and a beer garden. Whether you were a seasoned adventurer or a curious newcomer, the Outdoor Experience had something for everyone.

New for this year was a 200 ft zip line enjoyed by children and adults alike. A 9-hole disc golf course presented by Hazy Shade Disc Golf challenged participants. Tomfoolery Outdoors had yard games for folks to enjoy while they took in some music from the WYSO main stage. Wright State University once again was on hand to belay new climbers on the climbing wall. Even though it was the first weekend of October, the weather allowed for those curious about paddle sports to get on the water in a canoe, kayak or stand-up paddleboard with help from University of Dayton Research Institute (UDRI). Surf Dayton was on hand to provide a stand-up paddleboard workshop and to answer questions about river surfing.

Bikes are always well represented at the event and this year was no exception. The Try Mountain Biking Area was situated right in the middle of all the action. Riders streamed through the course all weekend long. Mike's Bike Park ran the pump track for the more advanced riders while Black Pug Bike Repair kept the little kiddos

moving on the tot track. Bike Miami Valley was on hand to provide a temporary Link Bike Share station for those who were wanting to ride a Link Bike from downtown Dayton. Cyclotherapy provided a bike valet all weekend for cyclists to have monitored bike parking. While all that was going on, Huffy was running the Try Cycling area. Participants were able to ride a bike along the Mad River Trail, part of the Nation's Largest Paved Trail Network.

The Expo area was once again one of the main focuses of the event. Exhibitors showed off the newest gear and had the opportunity to speak to attendees about their clubs and outdoor organizations. The Outside Magazine Van Tour bookended the expo area with the Outside Outdoor School. Programs ran throughout the event featuring talks ranging from Leave No Trace principles to how to make fishing lures.

WYSO again did a great job organizing an amazing musical lineup. The air resonated with the melodious tunes of local bands playing on the stage. Food trucks enticed with a diverse array of culinary delights, from savory barbecue to kettle corn and burgers. Beer from Great Lakes Brewing and Fifty West Brewing was sold all through the event to benefit the Five Rivers MetroParks Foundation.

The event wasn't just for human attendees; furry companions were equally welcomed and celebrated. Dogs of all shapes and sizes gleefully participated in agility demonstrations and frolicking freely in the designated dog park. Dog parking was provided by Best Breed allowing people to go enjoy different activities. The Zoom Room had an obstacle course set up for the dogs to get in on the action as well.

High flying demonstrations kept the energy up all weekend. BMX riders soared above the crowd showing off their skills including 2-time national champion, 8-year-old Huck Kurinsky. The Chris Clark Mountain Bike Trials show amazed onlookers with his technical bike handling skills. Highline slackliners performed mind boggling tricks above the expo area.

Competitions included a 12-hour endurance run supported by the Ohio River Road Runner (ORRRRC). Runners challenged themselves to complete as many laps circumnavigating the event from 7 AM to 7 PM. On Sunday morning a Doggy Dash 5k hosted by Key Sports and Runners Plus kicked off the day's activity. Throughout the weekend, the Dock Dogs drew a consistent crowd. Dogs competed in Big Air and Extreme Vertical events! Seeing the dogs splash into the pool is always a crowd favorite.

The Wagner Subaru Outdoor Experience wasn't just a weekend of fun and adventure; it was a testament to the power of community, a celebration of nature, and a reminder of the importance of environmental stewardship. It was a weekend that fostered a sense of belonging and a shared love for the outdoors, a sentiment that will undoubtedly continue to resonate through the Dayton community and beyond.



Thousands of outdoor enthusiasts will converge on Dayton, Ohio: The Outdoor Adventure Capital of the Midwest for a weekend of outdoor skill, culture and experience. Join them, and see what the excitement is all about!

The Adventure Summit is an event celebrating the spirit of outdoor adventure by showcasing the vibrant lifestyle and culture of human powered endeavors through inspiration, education, and experience.

The Adventure Summit has a rich history of featuring world class outdoor personalities. From endurance runners to long distance backpackers and the founding father of mountain biking to polar explorers, our featured personalities each year are sure to inspire and amaze. The Adventure Summit presented by Wagner Subaru is FREE!

2024 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

JANUARY

January 6, 2024

Buckeye Trail Winter Hike and Potluck Feast - Caesar Creek Section

Kick off the season of winter hikes with a trek on the Blue Blazes in southwest Ohio. Join us Saturday, January 6, 2024 for the Buckeye Trail Winter Hike and Potluck at Caesar Creek State Park. Hosted by Dayton Hikers since 2013, this event is the premiere winter hike on the Buckeye Trail in southwest Ohio. Five guided hikes are offered ranging from three to twelve miles. All hikes are the Buckeye Trail. Afterwards, join us for a potluck feast inside the visitor center at Caesar Creek. Bring a dish to share.

For more information and to sign up visit:

<https://bit.ly/bt-winterhike>

January 13-14, 2024

Buckeye Trail Circuit Hike - Mogadore Section

Saturday: Meet at 8:30 am. at the overflow lot of McDonald's on Lynn Rd, Ravenna near the Ohio 44 and I-76 interchange at 41.110681 -81.241158. We will carpool back to a small pull off along Knapp Road where we will walk the road about 3/10ths of a mile to the BT trail head into the woods at 41.143222 -81.187113. Hike distance is about 10.6 miles.

Sunday: Meet at 8:30 am. at The Boathouse lot on 2578 Ohio 43, Mogadore Ohio. This lot is on the Cleveland Canton Road at 41.059895 -81.346804. We will carpool to the overflow lot of McDonald's on Lynn road, Ravenna near the Ohio 44 and I-76 interchange at 41.110681 -81.241158. Hike distance is about 9.7 miles.

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

January 14, 2024

Lockkeepers Hike - St Marys Section

Join us Sunday, January 14, 2024 for the first of the season's Cabin Fever Hikes. Register anytime between 1pm-3pm at the Lockkeepers' House, located at 22 S. Water Street, New Bremen, Ohio. Explore the interpretive signage, historical photos & artifacts from the canal era, as well as the restored Lock One North. Sign up for the 'Road to Fitness' program with Grand Lake Health Systems to earn points & win cool prizes! Enjoy complimentary trail mix while you hike, provided by the St. Marys Area Resource Team. This event will be a great opportunity to lose your cabin fever, work on New Years' fitness resolutions, and enjoy the sights & sounds of wintertime along the Miami Erie Canal.

Contact: info@htparks.org

FEBRUARY

February 3, 2024

Findley State Park Winter Hike - the 43rd

Time: 10 AM

Distance: 5k hike - the guided hike will be 5k on the Wyandot and Thorn Mountain Bike Trail. Meet at the campground pavilion.

Location: Findley State Park is at 25381 State Route 58, Wellington, OH 44090.

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

February 10-11, 2024

Buckeye Trail Circuit Hike - Mogadore Section

Saturday: Meet at 8:30 am at a roadside pull off along Wingfoot Lake Road near the Goodyear Blimp Hanger at 41.007842 -81.351238. We will carpool to the Boathouse lot on 2578 OH 43 Mogadore at 41.059895 -81.346804. Hike is about 10.6 miles.

Sunday: Meet at 8:30 am. at the Lake Township Community park at 40.959314 -81.355682. We will carpool back to a roadside pull off on Wingfoot Lake Road at 41.007842 -81.351238. Hike distance is about 9.2 miles.

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

February 11, 2024

Valentines Hike - St Marys Section

For this Cabin Fever Hike, register between 1:00pm - 3:00pm at the St. Marys Utilities Building, located at 106 East Spring Street in St. Marys. View the 'Belle of St. Marys' canal boat, restored Lock #13, as well as the recently restored Reservoir Mill. Continue along the canal towpath for a healthy, fun, and free hike for the whole family, all ages welcome!

The St. Marys Area Resource Team will be on-hand to greet participants and hand out trail mix to enjoy while you hike. You can also register for the 'Road to Fitness' program with Grand Lake Health Systems and earn points to win cool prizes! Invite your Valentine to enjoy some fresh air & the winter wonders of a Sunday afternoon along the Towpath Trail.

Contact: info@htparks.org

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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.

MARCH

March 10, 2024

Spring Forward Hike - St Marys Section

Spring Forward with Heritage Trails Park District! Join us on Sunday, March 10th with an early springtime hike along the Miami Erie Canal Towpath Trail. Meet at Noble Township Hall, located at 16586 CR 66A, just north of St. Marys anytime from 1pm-3pm. The St. Marys Area Resource Team will be on-hand to greet participants and hand out trail mix to enjoy while you hike! Register for the 'Road to Fitness' program with Grand Lake Health Systems and earn points to win cool prizes! Bring the whole family! Pets on a leash are welcome as well. Lose your cabin fever by getting outdoors & seeing the first signs of spring along the canal towpath... Hope to see you all there!

Contact: info@htparks.org

APRIL

April 14, 2024

April Showers Hike - St Marys Section

Join Heritage Trails Park District on Sunday, April 14th for our April Showers hike along the Miami Erie Canal! Bring the whole family! Pets on a leash are welcome as well. Meet at Noble Township Hall, located at 16586 CR 66A, just north of St. Marys from 1pm-3pm. The St. Marys Area Resource Team will be on-hand to greet participants and hand out trail mix to enjoy while you hike! Register for the 'Road to Fitness' program with Grand Lake Health Systems and earn points to win cool prizes! Hope to see you all there!

Contact: info@htparks.org

April 26-28, 2024

Blue Blaze Academy

More details to be announced.

Meals: The Chuckwagon will be there to provide all meals.

JUNE

June 20-23, 2024

EGGS Hike

More details to be announced.

Meals: The Chuckwagon will be there to provide all meals.

SEPTEMBER

September 12-15, 2024

TrailFest 2024

The Central Ohio Chapter is proud to announce that the 11th Annual Buckeye TrailFest will take place on September 12th-15th 2024 in Columbus, Ohio at Camp Mary Orton.

We would like to know what sort of topics that you, the hikers and volunteers who love the Buckeye Trail, are interested in. If you would like to take some time to complete an interest survey for TrailFest, you can find it here on <https://buckeyetrail.org/> under "Save the Date for TrailFest 2024."

Buckeye Trail Work Party Dates

May 11-15, 2024

Little Cities of the Forest Chapter - Stockport Section

Meals: The Chuckwagon will be there to provide all meals.

June 1-5, 2024

Crooked River Chapter - Mogadore Section

Meals: The Chuckwagon will be there to provide all meals.

July 13-17, 2024

Wilderness Chapter - Road Fork & Whipple Sections

Meals: The Chuckwagon will be there to provide all meals.

July 27-28, 2024

Ohio River Chapter - Williamsburg Section

Meals: No chuckwagon. Please bring your own food.

July 27-31, 2024

Crooked River Chapter - Burton Section

Meals: The Crooked River Chuckwagon will be there.

August 10-14, 2024

Little Cities of the Forest Chapter - New Straitsville Section

Meals: The Chuckwagon will be there to provide all meals.

August 17-21, 2024

Crooked River Chapter - Akron Section

Meals: The Crooked River Chapter is providing a cabin with a kitchen for overnight crew to use. In addition, the Chapter will provide snacks, water and Gatorade for the entire event, as well as doughnuts, pizza, and a BBQ dinner.

September 21-25, 2024

Crooked River Chapter - Burton Section

Meals: The Chuckwagon will be there to provide all meals.

Buckeye Trail Association

P.O. Box 5
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