



## BTA's First Official Trail Town

*by Chris McIntyre*

Enjoy the best of Milford, BTA's first official Trail Town. I am happy to have played a part in the process of inaugurating the city of Milford as our first official Buckeye Trail Town. The Trail Town program recognizes communities on or near the Buckeye Trail that support hikers and promote the Buckeye Trail.

To consolidate BTA's recognition of our new Trail Town, the BT has been rerouted so hikers can enjoy many of Milford's amenities and interesting features. Milford without doubt meets all the criteria. It offers a variety of features including a charming main street, hiker-friendly shops and restaurants, attractive architecture, several camping locations for thru-hikers, an interesting history and the beautiful 130-acre Valley View nature preserve. Milford is also located at the intersection of eight of America's Long Distance Trails, which together total over 22,000 miles. The trails connect in Milford and wind through its streets, offering a great way to explore the many facets of Milford before hikers continue their trail adventures.

Buckeye Trail's reroute follows sidewalks through Milford, permitting access to the town, including a very trail-friendly outfitter store. The Buckeye Trail passes lovely historical homes as it wends its way to the woods and trails of the Valley View Foundation. There is plenty for the hiker to enjoy.

Historically Milford is an abbreviated form of "mill ford", so named because it was the first safe ford across the Little Miami north of the Ohio River. In 1818 a wooden bridge across the Little Miami was completed, making the ford obsolete.

Milford has been inhabited since prehistoric times. Its archaeological site, known as the "Gatch Site", has yielded large numbers of artifacts and is believed to be the site of a Native American village of Woodland period.

The Valley View Foundation's site is primitive, undeveloped farmland with water features, hills and ravines, wildlife and wooded areas. It is a nature preserve and education facility located close to the confluence of the East Fork and Little Miami Rivers. Valley View Foundation is a tax-exempt nonprofit corporation. The foundation was formed in 2002 by residents of Milford and others who were interested in preserving a historic farm and ecosystem for current and future generations to enjoy and learn from.



*Jenny Koester*

*The ceremonial ribbon-cutting on Buckeye Trail's reroute into Trail Town Milford. The Buckeye Trail now takes a hiker right through town, where everything a self-respecting could want is available, including diversion from the trail, if needed. Check out BTA's newest reroute here, in both the Loveland and Williamsburg sections.*

Before settlers entered the Milford area in the 1790s, the Valley View property was probably a mosaic of woodlands and grasslands. Over the years, the land was cleared for agricultural purposes and natural wetlands were drained. Since the Valley View Foundation took ownership of the property and active farming ceased the fields are slowly reverting to their natural state providing a habitat for local and migratory birds.

The East Fork of the Little Miami River runs through Valley View. For more than a mile, the river meanders through the woodlands. These riparian wetlands provide important environmental benefits and ideal habitat for amphibians and reptiles such as frogs and snakes. Ohio EPA, the City of Milford and Valley View cooperated on a grant to purchase the riparian area at Valley View for permanent conservation.

Thanks to the Valley View foundation. <http://www.valleyviewcampus.org/> BT hikers can now enjoy hiking through this beautiful property and avoid the busy and twisty South Milford Road.



Richard Lutz



Richard Lutz

BTA's new display in the Valley View Foundation. Valley View is a nature preserve and education facility near the confluence of the East Fork and Little Miami Rivers in Milford. It was formed in 2002 for the preservation of a historic farm ecosystem.



Jenny Koester



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Wooded trail on the Valley View Foundation makes for quiet, pleasant hiking. Bikes and horses are permitted only on marked trails, and Walk-in camping may be permitted with prior approval.