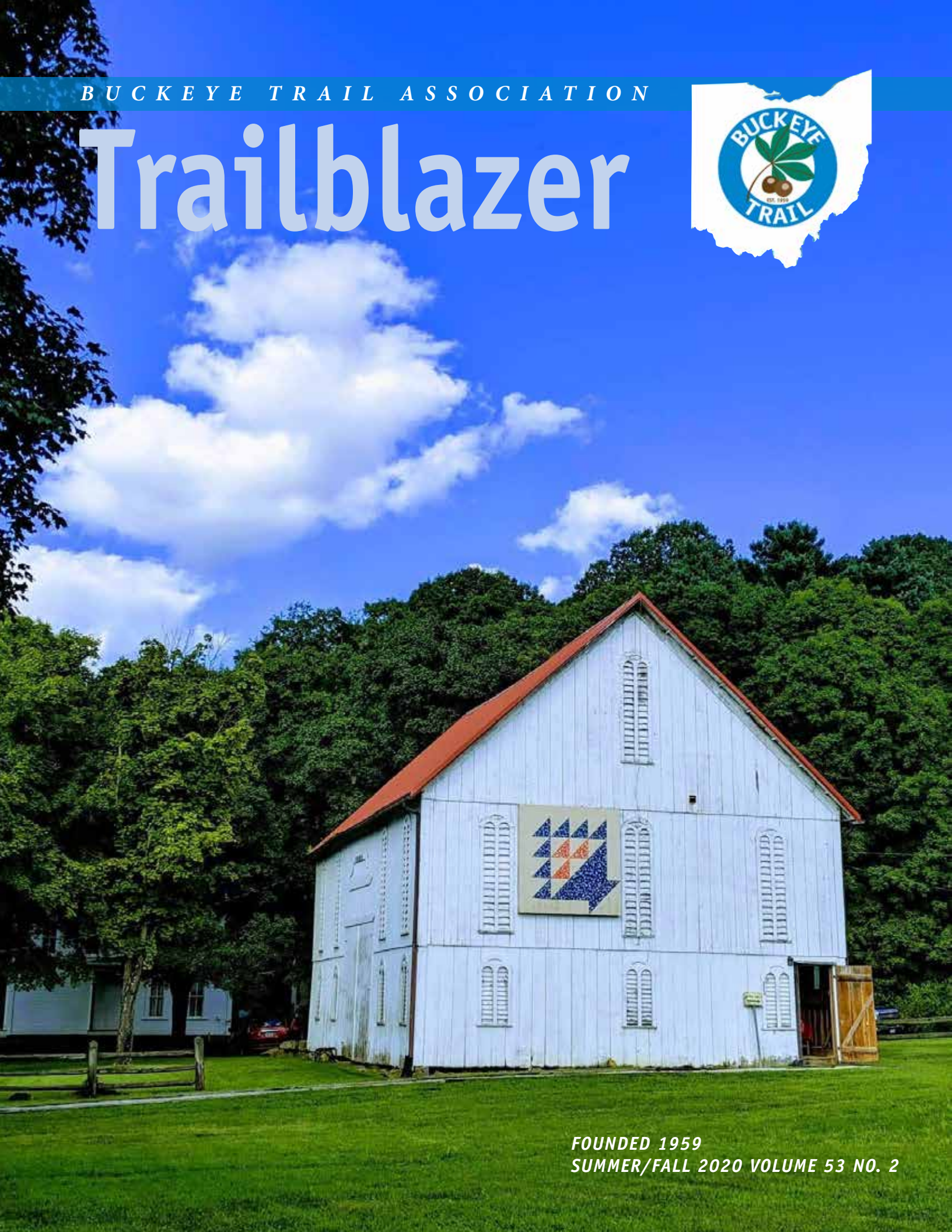


BUCKEYE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Trailblazer



FOUNDED 1959
SUMMER/FALL 2020 VOLUME 53 NO. 2

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Trailblazer

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



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Cover photo: BTA Century Barn at the
Beall Farmstead
Photo credit: Brandon Bates



Editor's Note

Pandorus Sphinx Moth

This summer has certainly been much different than we all expected it to be. Coronavirus put a dent in many of our plans and cancelled several events, even as the great outdoors remained open for hiking, biking, trotting and however one chooses to enjoy nature.

Among the list of things that has, unfortunately, been affected by the Coronavirus is our very own magazine, The Trailblazer. In a normal year, we'd have printed and delivered four issues – one for each season. This year, we had to forego printing in place for just digital pdfs, because of budgetary reasons. We also had to combine the summer and fall issue. The spring issue, as you all know, came particularly late. The winter issue may come late as well (though we certainly will try our hardest to release it as quickly as possible!).

The Trailblazer depends on enthusiastic members and Volunteer Leaders to send in articles and photographs to share with the membership as a whole. During the time of COVID, it's only understandable that writing articles is not a top priority generally. It is a confusing and difficult time for many, including us.

That being said, we at Buckeye Trail Association would love to hear your stories on the Buckeye Trail and see your photographs. If you have any content you're excited to share, please email them to me at trailblazer@buckeyetrail.org. If you have any questions, please email info@buckeyetrail.org

We hope that you have a wonderful autumn. Stay safe everyone.

~ Kris Vandervaart

Buckeye Trail Association

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Trail Preservation
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Buckeye Trail Hiker BINGO

Gas Station	Spider Web	Trail Magic	Stealth Camping	Hard to Pronounce Name
Creek Crossing No Bridge	Road Kill	Aggressive Dog	Snake	Tick
Rain	Not Seeing Another Hiker		Dirt Road	Blisters on Feet
Construction Zone	Mud	No Place To Use The Restroom	Mosquitos	Faded Blue Blaze
Barbed Wire Fence	No Trespassing Sign	Road Walk	Bullet Hole in Sign	Check Guthook App or Map at Intersection

www.buckeyetrail.org

Created by Andy Niekamp and Darlene Karoly.

Adapted from the Florida Trail bingo by Shayna Kott.



Cameron Foster, of Scout Troop 76 in Piqua, installed two benches on the Troy section of the Buckeye Trail on April 3, 2020, for his Eagle Scout project. The benches are located at Johnston Farm near North Hardin Road at mile 147.2 (Point #19). Cameron said, "these benches will allow for hikers and nature lovers to sit and rest or even just admire the beauty of the area around them."

Submitted by Andy Niekamp.

President's Message

Steve Walker

I began my last Trailblazer article by suggesting that time had flown since having to produce the new one. At the time I wrote that article, Covid-19 was primarily mentioned on a scroll at the bottom of the screen. Things sure have changed since the middle of February, but even with having to hang out at home a lot more, time is still flying.

Covid-19 began to spread widely by the middle of March. Reaction to this possible calamity and how it would affect our organization began in the middle of March. By the middle of March, your BTA Office began to adhere to Governor DeWine's guidelines and your Board of Trustees had started to adapt to this year's realities. BTA Staff were told to work from home and the BTA Office was closed to the public. By the middle of March, your Board had already met in special session to adopt a Coronavirus Policy. Since that time, the Policy has been modified twice to take care of contingencies that came up. Again on April 1st, your Board met in special session to adopt a revised 2020 BTA Coronavirus Budget that looked at targeted reductions in expenditures to compensate for possible lost revenues due to the pandemic. The Finance Committee, chaired by [former]* Vice President, Andy Haag, committed to convening twice monthly in the beginning so as to closely monitor the financial situation and your Executive Director, Andrew Bashaw, spoke with a grantor about changing the use of their grant. He also enrolled the Buckeye Trail Association in the stimulus based Payroll Protection Program that would help with payroll. Both efforts were successful. Just last month, the Finance Committee asked the Board to approve a modified 2020 BTA Coronavirus Budget that reflected real time monitoring of the ongoing situation.

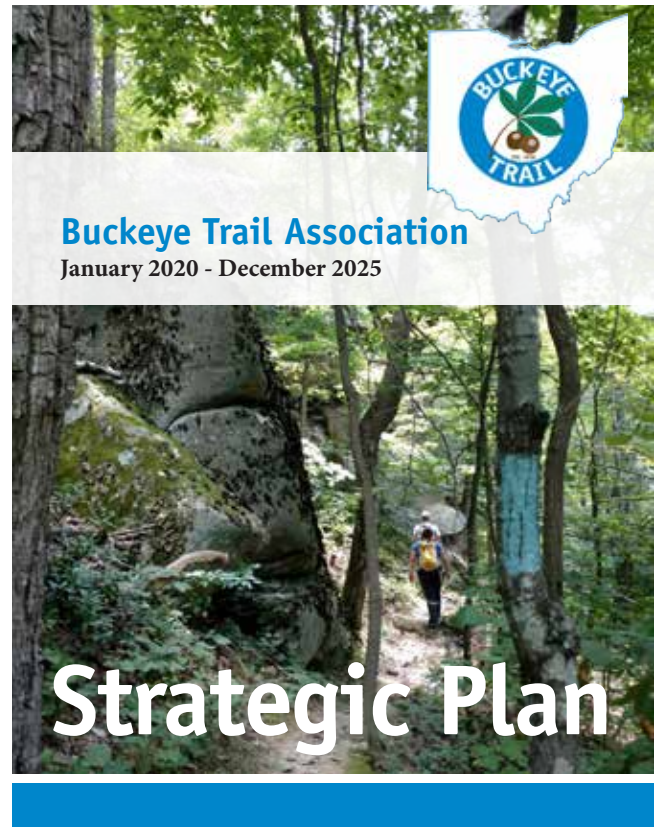
**Editor's Note: At the time this article was written, Andy Haag was still the Vice President.*

The Buckeye Trail Association has weathered the financial storm well so far and we're hopeful that our luck will hold.

Almost all BTA social events were canceled for 2020 and some were modified to adapt to social distancing. Some trail maintaining sessions were canceled and travel restriction guidelines kept some folks at home. The spring and early summer were both wet and very warm which help vegetation grow quickly making our work more difficult in a year when our activities were curtailed by a global pandemic. On Saturday, June 6, 2020, the Buckeye Trail Association held its first ever virtual Special Membership Meeting using Zoom that was attended by over 50 BTA members – the number we usually have in attendance at an in-person Annual Meeting. During that Zoom meeting, BTA members voted on and passed two changes to the BTA Constitution, heard Andrew's State of the Buckeye Trail address and had some questions answered. Because of the cancellation of Buckeye TrailFest 2020, your Annual Meeting had to be postponed. With the BTA By-Laws requiring a ninety-day notice, the Annual Meeting will be on Sunday, September 27, 2020 at 1:00 P.M. This will be a virtual meeting also and I hope that several of you will try and attend. Information on how to connect will be available on our website, <https://buckeyetrail.org/>, and notice will also go out in our monthly e-mail newsletter, The Loop, which is published around the 27th day of each month.

We had hoped to have our annual Board and Staff Retreat at the BTA Beall Farmstead and BTA Century Barn in-person using social distancing but the better part of valor finally asserted itself and we chose to conduct it virtually as well over three sessions. Ahead of that Retreat, the BTA Strategic Plan Working Groups met (again, virtually) to update our Strategic Plan to chart progress and to fine tune ongoing and future actions to accomplish the eleven major goals. In spite of the pandemic, we've accomplished quite a few things those of which were edited into the Strategic Plan spreadsheet that is our guidebook on how to grow and strengthen the Buckeye Trail Association. The Executive Summary of the Strategic Plan is available on the homepage of our website (<https://buckeyetrail.org/>). The new BTA Marketing Team (Co-Chaired by Valerie Gardner and Rory Robinson) will be helping most of the Strategic Plan Working Groups with developing their marketing efforts. The Marketing Team's first effort has been a presentation slide show that has been prepared by Everett Brandt (also known as the "Fastest Known Time Finisher of the Buckeye Trail") that can be used by anyone wanting to inform an audience about the Buckeye Trail.

In late July, the Buckeye Trail Association signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District that will provide a platform to work together to support the mission of both organizations to enhance and grow hiking trails in their footprint areas. One specific section of this MOU will help with development of the Green Corridor in Eastern Ohio potentially moving one hundred miles or more of the Buckeye Trail off road and on to a protected corridor. The BTA Membership Committee (Co-Chaired by Brandon Bates and Valerie Gardner) is developing a Fall Membership Campaign intended to complete a 2020 Focus of the Strategic Plan by adding an equivalent of 10 percent to our paid membership. That campaign should be well underway by the time you read this. Also by the time that you read this, eTapestry, our all-encompassing



Front cover of the Strategic Plan

organizational software suite will have had all three areas implemented. These areas include Membership, Donorship and the Volunteer Program. This effort has been greatly advanced by the efforts of Ted Shigley.

You can probably guess at what I'm going to say next. All this has happened with the assistance of our great volunteers but we can still use more help. If you want to be part of the growth of your favorite trail organization, please let me know by writing me at president@buckeyetrail.org. Have a great Fall and we hope to see you in person on the Buckeye Trail or at a BTA event some day in the future when this pandemic is in the past.

On the Trail

I miss you all. It's been said before that the BT is, above all, all about the people. The COVID-19/Coronavirus has impacted our ability to gather as members, volunteers, and hikers at BTA events like TrailFest, MorelFest, EGGS Hike, Little Loop Challenge and Run for Blue Blazes. We've had to limit the size and activity of local hikes and Buckeye Trail Crew Work Parties. BTA Staff have been limited to working from home more than at the office. We've had to adapt our budget and pivot our work plans like so many of you at home, work, and school.

And yet...

- We see an increase in hiking and camping around the BT and folks sharing those experiences on social media for the rest of us to live vicariously through them.
- A team of young American Conservation Corps (ACC) members making progress on the next phase of trail development near Shawnee, OH thanks to our partners at the Wayne National Forest.
- BTA Volunteers, like James 'Sunny' Sunyak, working with the Cuyahoga Valley National Park on major Buckeye Trail improvements.
- BTA Trail Crew Members setting down their pulaskis and picking up hammers to make great strides on the new BTA Office building at 129 West Main Street Shawnee.
- We've signed our first Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) after 60 years of partnership.
- We officially closed on the new 16 acre Lockington Preserve thanks to your support and the hard work of Richard Lutz and the Forest Conservancy Ltd.
- We are witnessing ODNR closing on thousands of acres of former AEP ReCreation Lands, the new Appalachian Hills Wildlife Area, which will host 24 miles of the BT for generations to come.
- We've contributed to the Governor's task force on outdoor recreation recommendations during COVID, while also participating in moving the Ohio Trails Vision forward.
- The Buckeye Trail Crew is back out on the BT dividing themselves up into teams of 10 or less to get important work done even during the pandemic.
- We've said farewell to our 2019-2020 AmeriCorps Members; George Blankenhorn, Charles Gordon, and Scot Gardner, and welcome to our 2020-2021 team of Kris Vandervaart, Jon Flinn, and Preston Prather.

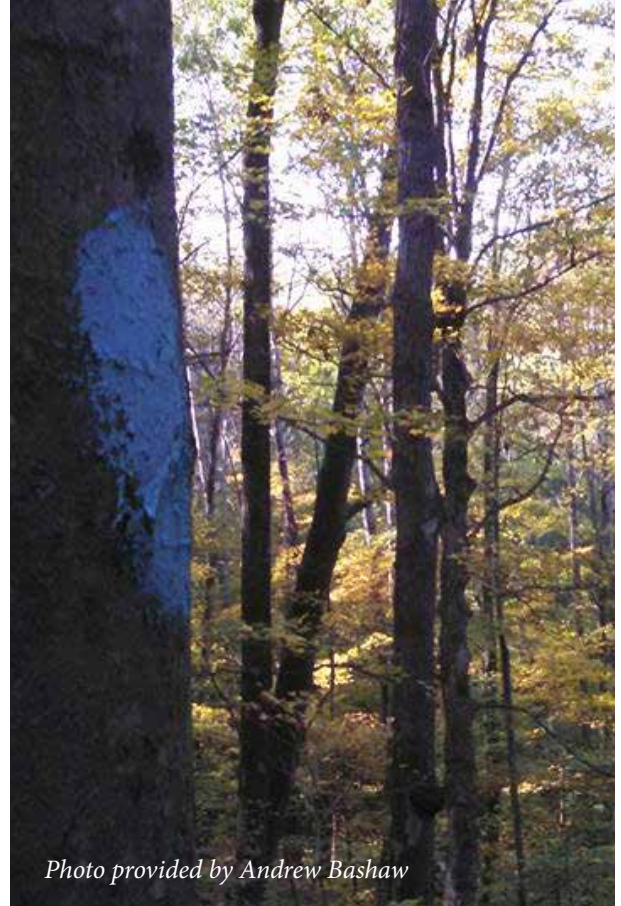


Photo provided by Andrew Bashaw



Photo provided by Andrew Bashaw

- We've pivoted from in person BTA special events to developing our new database to better manage our interactions with volunteers, members and donors going forward.
- We're adapting to meeting virtually for BTA Board strategic planning, Staff and partner calls, as well as our BTA Membership meetings.
- So far we've been able to ride the storm out thanks to trimming our budget, a few timely grants from the Campbell Foundation and REI, a legacy gift from BTA Member Cecil Dobbins, the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), and an outpouring of support from BTA Members and Donors during the Big Give.
- Two new BTA Chapters are forming to achieve the mission of the BTA locally; the Lake Plains Chapter encompassing the Pemberville, Norwalk and Medina Sections across the northern tier of the BT and the Miami & Erie Canal Chapter with the Defiance, Delphos and St Mary's Section following the canal towpath in northwestern Ohio.

Like everyone else, this year is not going as planned for the BT, and yet together we struggle daily to adapt and meet the challenges of building, maintaining, protecting, and promoting Ohio's Buckeye Trail despite all the changes and uncertainty. We couldn't do this without our volunteers and support of members like you. We thank you, and hope that you are taking the opportunity to hike, physically distanced, with friends and family out on the BT. We've been creating it together for 60 years for just such an occasion.

Be Safe and Thank you for Hiking!

Andrew Bashaw

Executive Director

BTA Funds Report

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

FEBRUARY 2020 TO AUGUST 2020

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David Baker	Thomas Friedman	Kroger Community Rewards	Richard Saccardi
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Scott Bernard	Jan Geho	Constance Loving	Tessa Edeburn Schmidt
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Kathleen Fix	Michael Kohr	Malena Phillips	Nancy White
Mike Flanders	Melody Kornacker, in appreciation of BT Hikers	Karen Power	Daryan Wood
		Timothy & Deborah Ray	Jeffery Yoest

TRAIL PRESERVATION FUND

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Cecil Dobbins, Planned Gift

David Miller
Nancy Quist

William Schultz & Leslie Floyd

129 PROJECT - NEW BTA OFFICE DEVELOPMENT: 129 WEST MAIN STREET, SHAWNEE, OH

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Placemaking and Blue Blazes

The Ohio Field School Comes to the BTA

Evan DeCarlo

In early March of 2020, only a few days before the COVID-19 pandemic would officially force much of the country into quarantine, I spent a week working with the Buckeye Trail Association at their headquarters in Shawnee, OH. I had not come to the BTA HQ, like so many do, to help maintain, blaze, or even hike the trails of Perry County – although I did end up clumsily shambling past my fair share of those famous blue blazes. No – rather, I had come to the BTA as a fieldworker for the Ohio Field School, an ongoing ethnographic directive conducted by the Center for Folklore Studies at OSU.

One might be forgiven, of course, for wondering what precisely ethnography and folklore have to do with a hiking trail. Folklore is the stuff of goblins, ghosts, and urban legends, isn't it? That's the popular connotation, anyway, and it's not entirely inaccurate. For a little less than two centuries (and some might argue for quite a lot longer than that) folklore has been emerging as an academic discipline, one not defined necessarily by the study of what we might conventionally call folklore (legends, tales, etc.) but by the study of – well – the folk! But just who are these folk? It's a term that might seem bucolic, but as it's used academically, folk has come to encompass everyone and anyone – from your rural farmer to your Wall Street banker. Thus, Folklore Studies (sometimes called Folkloristics) makes its bones as a field analyzing both the folk and the second half of the eponymous equation: the lore. This "lore" can take shape as almost anything: art, jokes, stories, communal customs, cultural practices, rituals, modes of thought even graffiti. Almost anything that might be passed around informally – through tradition, word of mouth, the internet, you name it – can count as folklore, and a lot more than that, to boot; it's all part of the culture of the many intersecting folk groups that make up our modern lives. That's where the ethnographer – the fieldworker – comes in: a scholar who has elected to study the culture of a certain folk group by immersing oneself in it.

The 2020 section of the Ohio Field School, whose overarching goal was to explore themes of placemaking (the functional framework for the "lore" in question) had been sent to work alongside a web of folk groups made up of the



Trail Sign at Tecumseh Loop

residents of Perry County. Each pair of students, however, had chosen a smaller local community group or organization with which to collaborate; the scope of these projects ranged from surveying cemeteries with the Rendville Historical Preservation Society to pouring through the photographic archives of the Monday Creek Watershed Restoration Project. Along with my research partner Hannah Griswold, I had elected to work with the Buckeye Trail Association. As a newcomer to Ohio and an (extremely) amateur hiker, I wanted to learn more about this mysterious 1,400+ mile long endeavor that seemed something like a midwestern cousin to the Appalachian Trail that famously wends its way up the eastern seaboard.

Nominally, Hannah and I had come to digitize the loosely archived files of one of the BTA's original founding members, Merle H. Marietta. But what could an old box of files have to do with our group's mission? How could we take the dusty mimeographs and old postcards and turn them into some kind of cultural conversation about placemaking? What even is placemaking?

I can loosely describe placemaking as the collection of processes – abstract, cultural, emotional, physical, economic – that go into the construction of a place, both its manifestation as a collective cultural idea and often even the rendering and demarcation of

its physical space. A place can contain multitudes of places, in this sense: Shawnee, for instance, inhabits simultaneously the identities of Appalachia, of the Midwest, of the inheritor to the legacy of extraction economies – and so on. Similarly, we would soon learn the Buckeye Trail – which is an exceptionally long path through the woods, isn't it? – represented a similarly complex myriad of intersecting cultural conceptions of place.

When we came at last to Shawnee after preparing for the project for several months, we met with Executive Director Andrew Bashaw, a quiet man with a ponytail who looks like a hiker even as he sits in a desk chair, amidst the scattered trail markers, maps, rocks and national park magnets that all make up the BTA's office space. Andrew had some ideas for our project that went well beyond the scope of merely photocopying Mr. Marietta's files; he asked us to structure our thinking around an old Columbus Dispatch article originally published in 1958. In the article, Perry Cole (contemporaneous pseudonym of Merrill Gilfillan) proposes the original idea for the Buckeye Trail, reasoning out on the page what could (and did) prove to be the many challenges and benefits of pursuing such an undertaking. Pervading the proposal is the spirit of Cole's (Gilfillan's) title: "A Buckeye Trail, So Far It Is Just an Idea."

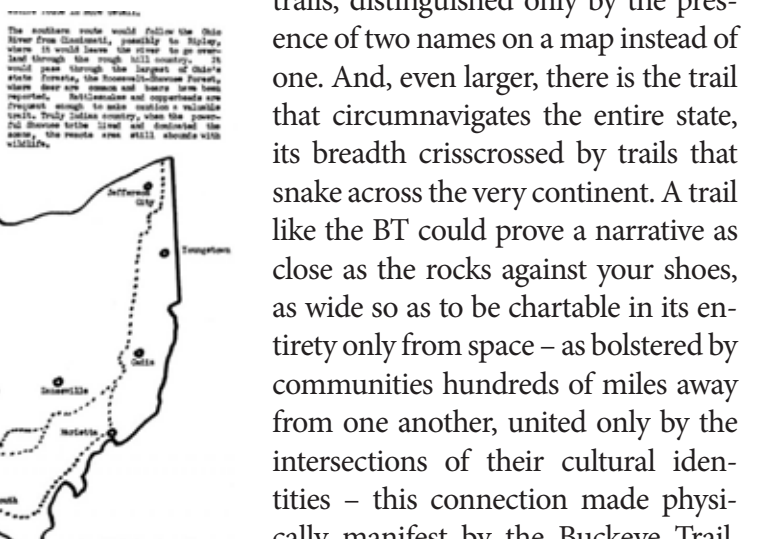
Hannah and I were struck by this notion, the stark contrast of the conceptual "idea" of 1958 evolving its way across over half a century into very real visible tangibility. The Buckeye Trail was no longer an idea, but a physical fact of life. Or, so we thought.

Mr. Marietta's dusty box of files, we would soon discover, told a story of negotiations and inspirations. Before the physical "place" of the Buckeye Trail could

ever be rounded out, the idea of its "place" had to first be compromised into and against all the other ideas of "place" floating around the forests and hills of Ohio. After all, it's never just a grove, is it? Chiefly, there was the ever-looming presence of the famous Appalachian Trail. How could the BT take cues from its eastern cousin while still distinguishing itself as unique? And then there were the many compromises. Here was a series of letters detailing a deal with Guernsey County Community Members – horses could be permitted to ride the county's section of the trail so long as the local saddle club could offer lodging opportunities; here was a proposal, written after a banquet with the Morgan County Coon-hunters' Association, suggesting that official trail certificates be given to local farmers in the area to improve relations; here were the minutes from the meeting of the BTA that brought into being the organization's constitution, and all the accompanying notes that hash out the potential benefits of such a document, article by article.

What emerged from our perusing (and dogged scanning) was the picture of a trail existing simultaneously at multifarious levels of scale and perspective. The trail was not - could not be, and still is not - the product of the efforts of a single institution (like the BTA) or a town, but the product of cooperation across many lines of all kinds, across varying scales. A trail, after all, can be a kind of immediate thing – it is there beneath your feet as you stand on it, there as you walk it (or, in my case, stumble). You must feel very intimately its bumps and grooves. But there again is the trail at another level – the path that snakes by, through, or around the local town. And there again is the trail, the same trail that crosses the county wide, intersecting and even inhabiting the same well-trodden soil paths as other trails, distinguished only by the presence of two names on a map instead of one. And, even larger, there is the trail that circumnavigates the entire state, its breadth crisscrossed by trails that snake across the very continent, as wide so as to be chartable in its entirety only from space – as bolstered by communities hundreds of miles away from one another, united only by the intersections of their cultural identities – this connection made physically manifest by the Buckeye Trail.

This sense of the trail as narra-



Photocopy of Merrill Gilfillan's (AKA Perry Cole) "A Buckeye Trail, So Far It Is Just an Idea." ¹

tive, we came to learn, pervades the discourse of BTA members. On our first official hike in the hills around Shawnee with Richard Lutz (GIS Coordinator and chair of the Trail Management Team), he would stop us every so often and tell us we had come across what he called an “interpretation point.” These points, often vistas, served as spots from which to tell and reflect upon some kind of story – sometimes about a particular plant, sometimes about local history, sometimes about the effect of industry on the local environment (standing and staring at a pile of coal gob can make the often distant-feeling effects of manmade climate change seem very real and very apparent). The trail, in this way, became a kind of living museum – not just a path to be walked but a story told in its walking.

This narrative idea was echoed by many of the BTA members we interviewed, from longtime members like Herb Hulls and Connie Pond to young hot-shots like Everett Brandt, the current and only record holder for the fastest hike of the BT. Andrew Bashaw, too, often returned to the significance of narrative in our many conversations. “So many times, someone will be walking on the trail and not even know it – to them it’s just the trail in the woods behind the house, not the Buckeye Trail.” This idea never seemed to bother Andrew much – he continued: “The history is on that trail and that’s what’s important; it matters a lot less how you get there. It’s a corridor for all sorts of adventures, but history and ideals are what make the Buckeye Trail important. Every inch has a story that another hiking trail might not. It becomes part of peoples’ stories when they walk it. The histories of individuals are conjoined with bigger histories by hiking this trail.”

The histories and realities of local areas, too, are conjoined with the Buckeye Trail in interesting ways. The potential of Shawnee as a trail town – a town whose economy is devoted in part to the support of passing hikers – was often discussed by BTA members as a means of revitalizing the local com-



Folks pick out a new BTA logo during the 10th anniversary meeting of the BTA.

munity’s economy, sense of self identity, and purpose.

That the Buckeye Trail was ever “Just an Idea” seems a fact unchanged, and that is a miracle – a testament to the BTA and its devoted volunteers. The “place” of the trail is a collaborative reality socially inscribed in the minds of those who hike it, who blaze it, who maintain it, even those who don’t know it’s there – the towns and counties whose borders are made just a little more liminal by its intersection – the state whose disparate communities transmit both folk and “lore” down its paths to one another, and past those famous blue blazes.

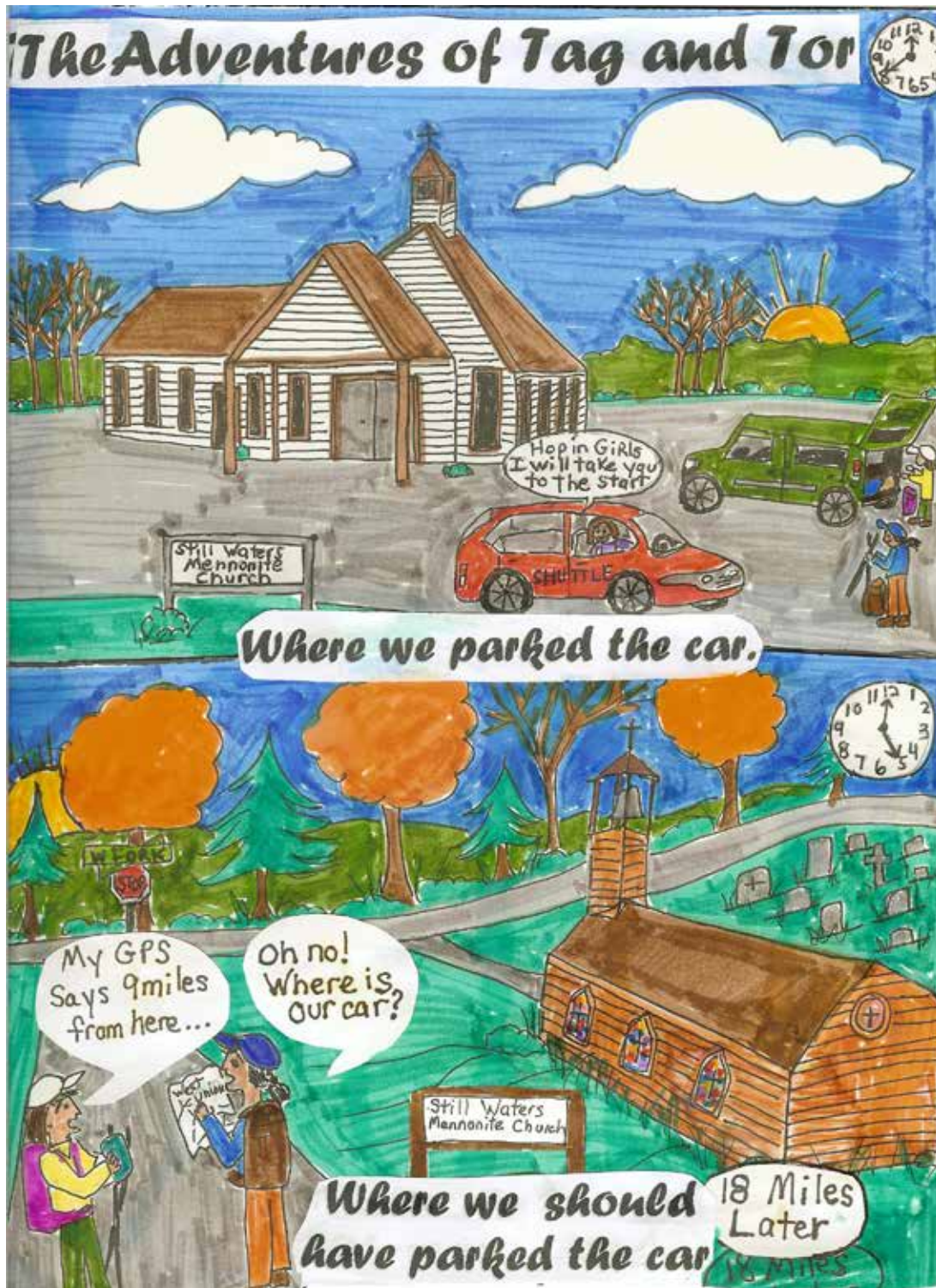
Further Resources from The Center for Folklore Studies:

<https://cfs.osu.edu/archives/collections/ohio-field-school>

<https://cfs.osu.edu/archives/collections/ohio-field-school/buckeye-trail>

¹ Image Cited (pg.11):

“Folklore Archives, Center for Folklore Studies, Ohio State University. Ohio Field School Collection. DeCarlo, Evan. Code: ofsp20200310hged006pdf1of2”

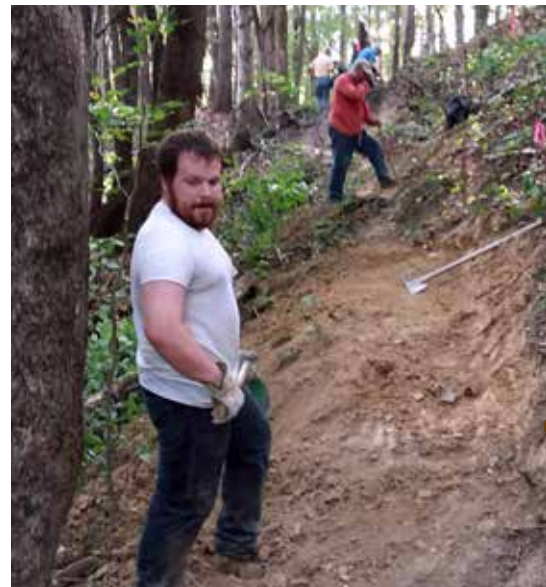


All of our cartoons are based on true events. Imagine our surprise when we realized that the original Still Water Mennonite Church that sits on the Buckeye Trail in the West Union section was no longer on the Buckeye Trail but had moved to a location several miles away. Lesson learned: When staging cars for a day hike, always check your Google Map directions against the Buckeye Trail map. --Tag and Tor

Cartoon by Karen Power and Jeri Getts



A Year of Service and Farewell to Our 2019/2020 AmeriCorps Members



In these next few pages, we will be sharing with you the farewells and well wishes from our AmeriCorps, George Blankenhorn, Charles Gordon and Scot Gardner. We enjoyed having them as part of our team and while we are sad to see them go, we wish them the best of luck going forward.

George Blankenhorn

In 2018, I was new to the Southeast Ohio region. I had just finished my Associates degree in science and knew absolutely nothing about volunteerism. I learned about the Buckeye Trail Association through Rural Action when I was not selected for another position and my resume was forwarded to Director Andrew Bashaw. When I started with the organization, I was supposed to be focusing on creating various content while helping to maintain office communications, but quickly had the entirety of the membership communications thrust upon me making it my principal focus. Doing the membership services was quite the experience. Fortunately, I was blessed to have Connie

Pond and Ted Shigley working on the new Etapestry system that streamlined the whole process and made it possible to complete mailings with just a few clicks.

I have learned so much invaluable information from the Ohio Stream Restore Corps (OSRC), now known as Appalachian Ohio Restore Corps (AORC). For those who do not know about AORC, it is an AmeriCorps program operating through Rural Action. AORC provides direct service in the community to “promote and support sustainability, stewardship, and ethical economies on our region” (more information is available at <http://ruralaction.org>).

[org/get-involved/amerikorps/](https://www.buckeyetrail.org/get-involved/amerikorps/)). AORC is a truly wonderful group of hard-working people. When asked, they would show up to build trail every time. I learned some very interesting aspects of trail building through my years and I have taken the information home with me and have started building trails in my free time. Seeing how a non-profit operates is interesting and being able to sit in on meetings with state organizations will hopefully help me interact more effectively with ODNR in the future. Seeing Andrew Bashaw act as Director was inspiring and I don't know how many times Richard Lutz had to help me with the printer so "Thanks Richard!". I was lucky enough to watch Herb Hulls and Jim Gilkey build trail and see what real work looks like. Working with the 2018-2019 Americorps member, Ryan Brown, on the Wood Thrush Loop brochure was the gem of the whole experience and I am glad I got to do something important that will exist after my time is done. So cheers to Buckeye Trail, I will continue to follow the blue blazes and will hopefully see you out there.



Scot Gardner

I began my time with the Buckeye Trail Association in August 2019 as a member of Ohio Stream Restore Corps (now known as Appalachian Ohio Restore Corps). I held the position of Special Projects Coordinator. My main responsibilities were completing smaller projects around the village of Shawnee to help support the Buckeye Trail's mission of turning Shawnee into a "Trail Town". Many of these projects were often overlooked, because they fell outside of the realm of trail building and maintaining. These projects included basic maintenance and grounds keeping around the Buckeye Trail office, also located in Shawnee. Serving alongside other Buckeye Trail volunteers to restore an old home and convert it into the new Buckeye Trail office, regularly maintaining and making improvements to the Wood Thrush and Lake Loop trails at Tecumseh Lake, and planting trees around Shawnee were some of the more rewarding projects I was able to work on and complete before the COVID-19 pandemic halted most tasks.

A couple of the more fulfilling projects that I worked on included the addition of a new internship position with the BTA. The intern, Aeden, is a recent high



school graduate from Glouster, Ohio and finished his internship with the BTA after serving 80 hours. Having Aeden has been a huge help. Many of the smaller projects that were on my list to complete, although small, still required more people than just myself. The BTA also had the privilege of hosting a trail crew from the Appalachian Conservation Corps, which constructed trail in the vicinity of the Upper Rock Run Reclamation Area. In both instances, what I really enjoyed was seeing some of the work, that had been delayed by COVID, finally be worked on and some of it even be completed. But what I enjoyed most was the element of serving as a liaison/ advisor, and mentor for these young individuals.

My time serving with the BTA has been only positive and enlightening. Three years prior to accept-

ing this position, I had just transitioned out of the Marine Corps after serving 8 years, where hiking was a task and a requirement and not usually much fun at all, but the BTA has given me a newly found love and appreciation for hiking. Being a new resident of Southeastern Ohio, the Buckeye Trail has provided me a pathway to explore and experience my surroundings, such as Wayne National Forest, the AEP Recreation Lands, and many of Ohio's State Parks. Trail building and serving within recreation and outdoor-based organizations has given me relevant and helpful work experience that is already paying off, as I have accepted a a job with the US Forest Service as a Wildland Firefighter. Going forward, I look forward to forever being an active member and volunteer of the Buckeye Trail Association.

Charles Gordon

Joining the BTA as an AmeriCorps member for my first year, it was a big step for me as it involved a big move to an area I had only ever visited once. The Buckeye Trail Association was a great experience, in my opinion, as the volunteers seemed to welcome me rather warmly and quickly, the activities I took in both in part of AmeriCorps and for the BTA were always interesting, and saw me out in nature. It was not only a chance to reconnect with nature and find work I could be proud of doing, it was a heck of a lot of fun. Though Covid-19 did indeed throw a wrench into most plans, it was also great to see people so adamant to do what they could with the circumstances. This last year has definitely given me an experience that will be with me for the rest of my life.



Volunteering during COVID-19

Volunteerism is hard in these times, Covid-19 has made a great impact on our abilities and willingness to engage in activities that may not be deemed as essential. For our non-profits and other volunteer-based organizations this also means that we are reluctant to host many volunteers at any given time, if at all! It truly becomes a situation in which the effect is negative for all of us, not just for volunteering, but for our mental well-being. I can certainly say that my psyche has been affected by quarantine. Like many of our volunteers, who may feel part of the trail is like their child, I've been feeling as though I am unable to provide service to the best of my ability. We all have currently had to put a hold on giving meaningful time.

However, through this darkness and feeling of being unable to perform meaningful service, spend time with volunteers or participate in group activities, I have come to realize that many of us here at the Buckeye Trail Association are still doing what we can. Both office employees and volunteers alike. Whether it's working on foundational needs, or just pressing forward with smaller groups, both for hik-



AmeriCorps, George Blankenhorn and Ashley Smith social distancing while setting up bird boxes.

ing and work days, any amount of help means something. We appreciate the work that has been done and we want to give a shout out to all of our volunteers and members who make it possible for us to do so. We are also lucky in that the outdoors is never truly closed, so we would still like to remind and implore everyone to enjoy the Buckeye Trail, and to remind others they can still enjoy it too; however, it's merely a matter of advocating that people do so safely now.

In following this theme, we would like to advocate that hikers, blazers, adopters and section supervisors alike please feel free to communicate with us; whether it's a question you may have or letting us know what you are currently up to with a social media post or picture, we'd love to be able to see that Covid-19 isn't breaking the outdoors spirit. Now more than ever, it's my personal belief that connecting with nature and each other when and where

we can, safely, is going to help strengthen not just the Buckeye Trail Association, but the Buckeye Trail family overall.

For those who would like to become more involved, or who would like to receive information about current needs of the Buckeye Trail Association, feel free to check out the website here: <http://buckeyetrail.org/involved.php>. We would also like to let you all know that we are in need of Section Supervisors for the following sections: Shawnee, New Straitsville, Troy and West Union. We would further like to thank Thomas Novak for his time as Troy's section supervisor; we are sorry to see him go, but understand that more immediate responsibilities are more important to keep up with, and wish him all the best for the future. I would also like to thank all of you for reading.

We'll see you on the trail!

2020 Schedule of Hikes & Events

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

Covid-19 guidelines: CDC recommends that people wear cloth face coverings in public settings and when around people outside of their household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Cloth face coverings may help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others. You will be required to submit to a temperature check daily before work begins. You will be required to sign a BTA event waiver.

Please review the BTA COVID-19 guidelines of 5/14/20 which is posted on the BTA home page.

SEPTEMBER

September 27, 2020

Buckeye Trail Association Annual Meeting 1:00pm

Tentative: This will be a Zoom meeting just like the successful Special Membership Meeting on June 6th of this year. With many Covid-19 restrictions still in place, the plan is to keep it as a Zoom meeting. The agenda is still being finalized but we will be having the election of Trustees to the BTA Board at this meeting. Login information will be available on the BTA Home Page on the morning of September 27th. If you have any questions, please let us know.

Contact: Steve Walker, President, at president@buckeyetrail.org



OCTOBER

October 3-4, 2020

West Union Section - Edge of Appalachia Work Weekend

Description: Maintenance work weekend in the beautiful 19,000 acre Richard and Lucile Durrell Edge of Appalachia Preserve. We will leave for work at 8:30am and quit at 3:30pm.

Camping: Near the maintenance building at 3223 Waggoner Riffle Rd. Camping GPS coordinates 38.74836, -83.46397. The shower will not be present.

Meals: Please bring your own food and water.

Contact: Contact Richard Lutz gis@buckeyetrail.org for work party information and to RSVP.

October 14-18, 2020

Old Man's Cave Section Work Week

Description: We will be reestablishing forested property trail and building new trail and barriers to be shared by equine riders. This will consist of new trail construction, re-benching the trail tread, heavy trail maintenance, vegetation management, bridge, puncheon or boardwalk construction, rock work (boulders, steps, cribbing, walls, stepping stones, etc.), Adirondack style shelter construction. The trail crew will be working from 8:30am to 3:30pm.

Camping: Hocking Soil & Water - Bishop Educational Garden 13200 Little Cola Rd, Rockbridge, OH 43149

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

Contact: Byron Guy at oldmancave@buckeyetrail.org for work party information and to RSVP.

October 17-18, 2020

BTA Circuit Hike - Caesar Creek Section

Saturday: Saturday's hike will be from near Point #4, Caesar Creek Visitor Center Parking Lot, N39.48967 W084.05925, to Caesar Creek Point #9, Caesar Creek Horseman's Camp, N39.53680 W084.01221. Distance of 11.3 miles. Meet no later than 8:30 a.m. at Point #9 at Caesar Creek Horseman's Camp and carpool to Point #4.

Sunday: Sunday's hike will continue from Point #9, at Caesar Creek Horseman's Camp to Point #13, Access Ramp Parking Lot N39.59971 W084.96735. Distance of 10.2 miles. Meet no later than 8:30 a.m. at Point #13, Access Ramp Parking Lot to carpool to Point #9.

Sign Up: Go to the BT Friends Meetup site to indicate you are attending: www.meetup.com/BuckeyeTrailFriends

Contact: Jay Shutt at shuttjay@gmail.com

Coronavirus update:

Some events may be canceled due to COVID-19. Please check our site or Facebook for updates.

October 24-28, 2020

Work Week in the Sinking Springs Section

Description: Check online for updates

Contact: Richard Lutz at gis@buckeyetrail.org

NOVEMBER

November 7th, 2020

BTA Board Meeting 10:00AM

Location: TBD

Contact: Steve Walker at president@buckeyetrail.org

November 14-15, 2020

BTA Circuit Hike - Caesar Creek Section

Saturday: Saturday's hike will be from near Point #13, Access Ramp Parking Lot N39.59971 W084.96735, to just past Point #16 at Weaver St. and US-68 N of Shawnee Park N39.69174 W083.93002. This is a distance of 10.0 miles. Meet no later than 8:30 a.m. at just past Point #16 at Weaver St. and US-68 N of Shawnee Park and carpool to Point #13.

Sunday: Sunday's hike will continue from just past Point #16, at Weaver St. and US-68 N of Shawnee Park to Point #19, parking Lot N.of Yellow Springs Station N39.80760 W083.88766. This is a distance of 9.1 miles. Meet no later than 8:30 a.m. at Point #19, at parking Lot N.of Yellow Springs Station to carpool to just past Point #16.

Sign Up: Go to the BT Friends Meetup site to indicate you are attending: www.meetup.com/BuckeyeTrailFriends

Contact: Jay Shutt at shuttjay@gmail.com

DECEMBER

December 12-13, 2020

BTA Circuit Hike - Caesar Creek and Troy Sections

Saturday: Saturday's hike will be from near Point #19, parking Lot N.of Yellow Springs Station N39.80760 W083.88766. to Point #25 YMCA parking lot, 308 S. Central Ave., N39.81765 W084.02013. This is a distance of 10.7 miles. Meet no later than 8:30 a.m. at Point #25 YMCA parking lot, 308 S. Central Ave. and carpool to Point #19.

Sunday: Sunday's hike will continue from Troy Point #1, YMCA parking lot, 308 S. Central Ave. to Troy Point #4, Gravel parking lot, NW corner of Findlay St. & Monument Ave. N39.77342 W084.16043. This is a distance of 9.6 miles. Meet no later than 8:30 a.m. at Troy Point #4, Gravel parking lot, NW corner of Findlay St. & Monument Ave. to carpool to Point #25.

Sign Up: Go to the BT Friends Meetup site to indicate you are attending: www.meetup.com/BuckeyeTrailFriends

Contact: Jay Shutt at shuttjay@gmail.com



Photo by Brandon Bates

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Buckeye Trail Association

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