

BUCKEYE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Trailblazer



FOUNDED 1959
SUMMER 2025 VOLUME 58 NO. 2

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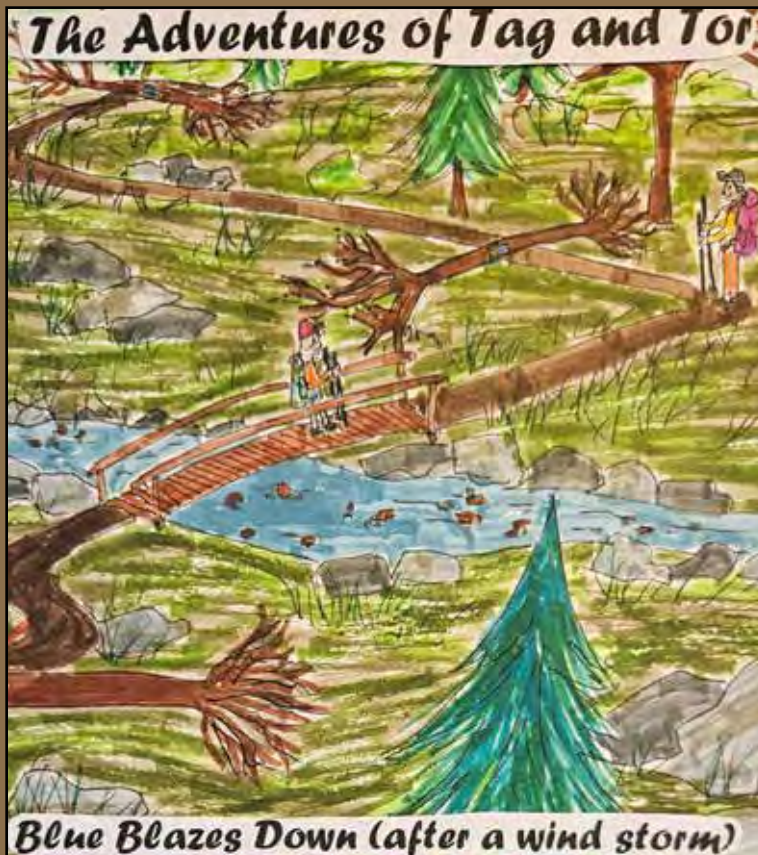
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Editor's Note

As I gain familiarity with my role within the BTA and the BT itself, I am actively working to enhance our performance to ensure timely delivery of a high-quality service to the membership of the BTA. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, certain tasks have not been completed on time. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused and assure you that we are diligently working to overcome these challenges in the future. If you have ideas or want to help create content, email us at trailblazer@buckeyetrail.org.

Tag & Tor

Karen Power & Jeri Getts



All of us who have hiked the Buckeye Trail have offered, at one time or another, a word of thanks to the trail maintainers even if they weren't around to hear it. To the many volunteers who remove downed trees, clear vegetation, repair trail, build new trail, manage water flow across the trail, paint blazes, and regularly inspect trail for safety issues, thank you. You have made our trail experience so much better. Visit the Buckeye Trail Association website for more information on ways you, too, can volunteer.



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.

Cover photo: Old Mans Cave

Photo credit: Rebecca Shawhan

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Meet the Buckeye Trail Association's New Volunteer Program Manager!!!



Meet Alexys:

Hi everyone! My name is Alexys Nolan, and I'm absolutely thrilled to step into my new role as the Volunteer Program Manager for the Buckeye Trail Association. While I'm originally from Kalamazoo, Michigan, Ohio has been my home since 2017. During that time, I've had the pleasure of working in ecological restoration and conservation at organizations like The Wilds, the Dawes Arboretum, and MAD Scientist Associates.

Outside of work, you'll find me

Alexys Nolan has joined the Buckeye Trail Association as a full-time staff member, taking on the role of Volunteer Program Manager. On Alexys joining, BTA Executive Director Andrew Bashaw said "We're thrilled to have Alexys joining our team as the BTA's new Volunteer Program Manager! Alexys' balanced experience in research and field work is a great asset to the continuing evolution of our volunteer program. Alexys' work will help our program grow in recruiting volunteers, as well as training and outfitting all types of BTA volunteers both on and off the BT. Please welcome Alexys and share your knowledge of the Buckeye Trail with her."

volunteering with parks, gardening, reading, baking, and trail running. I'm incredibly excited to connect with the Buckeye Trail Association's many dedicated volunteers. Volunteers have always been the heart and soul of the BTA, and my mission is to ensure every volunteer, both new and experienced, has the training and resources that they need to thrive. I envision a future where all BTA volunteers across the state feel fully supported and proud to be part of what I hope will be THE BEST volunteer program around!

Hike into Summer

With Fresh new BTA Merch from THE Official Buckeye Trail Shop!



BTA Membership has its Perks!!! Visit the Trail Shop today to learn about your discount!!!



Scan the QR code to visit the shop!



President's Message

Steve Walker

I hope that you all had a great Spring. It's hard to believe but we're halfway through 2025 already. This year started with a bang with our National Scenic Trail Feasibility Study Public Meetings and we haven't had much of a break from important business since then. This will be the "New Normal" for the Buckeye Trail Association as BTA Volunteers take our favorite trail organization to the next level.

Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Through the last five-and-a-half years, we've had a road map that brought the BTA to this point. It was our Strategic Plan 2020-2025. Originally presented at the Board & Staff Retreat in 2017, it had a two year gestation and was approved by the BTA Board of Trustees late in December of 2019. A lot of thought and discussion went into it during 2018 and 2019 and it was fairly ambitious in many aspects although not overly lengthy.

Challenges and Adaptability

It was meant to rely on BTA Volunteers to implement it as time went on and it has stood the test of time. The first big test of its adaptability came within three months of its formal adoption date of January 1, 2020. The Covid-19 Pandemic was working its way across the country and affecting every aspect of American society but the Buckeye Trail Association managed to stay focused on building, maintaining, protecting and promoting our favorite trail throughout that unprecedented time.

Achievements and Goals

Many of the goals charted in the Strategic Plan had definable completions and others identified an ongoing goal whose effort to achieve would always be striving for constant improvement. Some of the definable goals included implementation of a BTA Chapter Leadership Council which would meet quarterly at a Chapter Leadership Summit. This was accomplished in January of 2021 and has helped our BTA Chapters to collaborate and stay connected.

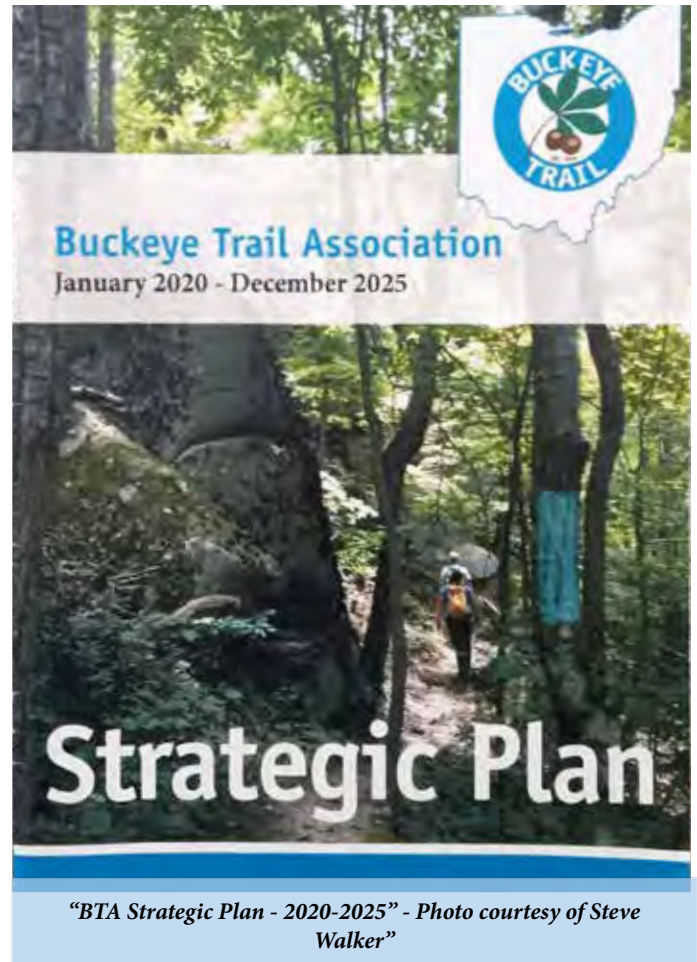
Another definable goal was the regular publication of our Online newsletter, The Loop, which has been regularly sent out to BTA members each month since April of 2020. Similar to that is the BTA's weekly Online publication, the BTA Friday High Five, which began in November of 2020. This publication focuses on the more active BTA Volunteer.

Future Planning

A while back, a goal related to improving the experience of hikers using the Buckeye Trail spawned the Buckeye Trail Hiking Experience Working Group. One of the important responsibilities that this strategic plan working group has taken on is to build and refine our Trail Angel Program.

One ambitious goal was to identify and seek designation of a total of twenty-five Buckeye Trail Towns by the end of 2025 and it looks like we might actually end up with twenty-two by the end of this year.

Another goal that was identified was to see that the Buckeye Trail is nationally recognized. In a process that began in the summer of 2021, the Buckeye Trail is currently the object of a feasibility study by the National Park Service for possible designation as the twelfth National Scenic Trail.



Conclusion

With the sunsetting of the current successful BTA Strategic Plan at the end of this year, the BTA Strategic Plan Working Group is already working to develop the a successor five year BTA Strategic Plan that will take our favorite trail and trail organization to the end of 2030. The working group is currently gathering data from BTA folks to see what direction of the Buckeye Trail Association will take for the next five calendar years. If you'd like to help with this important effort, please contact BTA Strategic Plan Working Group Co-Chair Elyria Little at elyria.little@buckeyetrail.org. Elyria and her Co-Chairs, Lori Luken and Maureen Gatewood will be glad to hear from you. Have a great Summer.

Steve Walker
president@buckeyetrail.org

On the Trail...

Andrew Bashaw



Andrew at the 2025 Blue Blaze Academy - Photo courtesy of Brian Batchelder.

As we hike along the Buckeye Trail all around the state, one foot in front of the other, we move across the landscape from one place to the next. Each footstep lands on a place that someone cares about.

A Journey Across Ohio's Landscape:

We step off a road walk that ODOT, a City or County Engineer, or a Township Trustee cares for on to a trail traversing public lands cared for by a community, a county park district, a state or a federal land manager. With each step

one partnership with the Buckeye Trail Association can hand off to the next continuously for over 1,400 miles. Some partners care about the whole state and the whole BT while others are focused on a limited geography. Hundreds of Buckeye Trail volunteers, staff, and hikers serve as ambassadors to our partners that have an overlapping mission and/or a shared vision of the Buckeye Trail connecting all these cared for places together into one uniquely Ohio experience that we enjoy.

The value of our partnerships is difficult to fathom. Imagine if we could survey all the public and private landowners and managers for the expense of their capitol improvements to develop and improve amenities along the BT. Add to that the costs of their professional staff planning and implementing trail improvements, working with our volunteers as well as organizing their own volunteers, their marketing and promotion efforts, and maintenance staff. Imagine multiplying that investment out across...

Landowner Hosts of the Buckeye Trail:

- 259 miles with 17 different county and metro park systems.
- 245 miles with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources including 18 State Parks, 11 State Wildlife Areas, 6 State Forests, 4 State Nature Preserves, several State Canal Lands, as well as 6 Ohio History Connection Historical sites.
- 64 miles with the US Army Corps of Engineers.
- 60 miles with 40 Villages and Cities including 22 designated Buckeye Trail Towns.
- 58 miles on the Athens and Marietta Units of the Wayne National Forest.
- 43 miles on Miami and Muskingum Watershed Conservancy Districts.
- 35 miles on non-governmental organization preserved lands.
- 19 miles on private lands, and
- 16 miles with the Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

Partner Trail Organizations and Advocacy Groups:

And that is just most of our landowner hosts of the BT. The list and the investment in the idea of the BT continues with our partner trail organizations such as the North Country Trail, American Discovery Trail, the Firelands Rails to Trail, Ohio & Erie Canalway, Miami & Erie Canal Corridor Association, Friends of the Little Miami Scenic Trail and more. Trail user and advocacy groups within the Ohio Trails Partnership include the Rails to Trails Conservancy, Ohio Horseman's Council, and Ohio Mountain Bike Alliance. The list continues to include numerous state and local businesses, land trusts, educational institutions, and elected representatives of the communities we both serve. Many BT 'partners' may not even be aware of their investment in the idea of the BT, such as one town developing trail to the next along the road walk of the BT.

Our vast network of partnerships is enviable, significant, and leverages a massive amount of investment in the BT that is above and beyond the time, effort, and expense of our nonprofit BTA. We are blessed with all these partners thanks to people like you; BTA members, volunteers, staff, and hikers, who have initiated these relationships and helped to strengthen them over the decades.

You can help make our network of partnerships even better by:

- Continuing to strengthen and deepen those relationships, being a great ambassador of the BTA, and reaching out to new partners.
- Highlighting your favorite BTA partnership by submitting a BTA nomination to the Awards Committee before the deadline closes.
- Or, inviting a local business to become a member of the Buckeye Trail Association.

Thank you for helping make Ohio's Buckeye Trail a piece of the fabric of a local community, and a special place that people care about all on its own.

Andrew Bashaw

Executive Director, Buckeye Trail Association



Buckeye Trail Association

New FarOut Update



In addition to general trail line updates & improvements, we have enhanced the user experience including:

- ✓ Photo integration for scenic views!
- ✓ Town Resupply Icons to stock up!
- ✓ Historical & Cultural Waypoints!
- ✓ Transportation Waypoints!
- ✓ And so much more!

Over a year in the making, the Buckeye Trail Association is thrilled to announce our latest update to FarOut! With an improved user experience for your hikes, the FarOut app features significant updates for multiple sections, icons to easily mark points of interest, and photo integration - marking your favorite vistas along the Buckeye Trail! These features, and so many more within the update, would not have been possible without the countless hours of dedication from our volunteers.

HIKE. Join. Volunteer

SAVE THE DATE

JULY 22-24, 2025 | ATHENS, OHIO

Be part of Ohio's first-ever Outdoor Recreation Economy Conference (OOREC)—a statewide gathering of 150+ leaders, planners, and outdoor professionals driving innovation, sustainability, and growth across the region. Hosted by the Outdoor Recreation Council of Appalachia (ORCA), this groundbreaking event is shaping the future of Ohio's outdoor economy.



WHERE INNOVATION MEETS ADVENTURE IN THE HEART OF APPALACHIAN OHIO



WHAT'S INCLUDED

2 days of sessions, *excursions, & networking

Optional Explore Day (July 24)

Happy hours, guided outdoor experiences, and more



WHEN

July 22-24, 2025



WHERE

Baker University Center
Ohio University, Athens, OH 45701

*EXCURSION OPTIONS INCLUDE:



BAILEYS TRAIL SYSTEM
MOUNTAIN BIKE RIDE



DOW LAKE PADDLING



HIGH ROPES &
ZIPLINE COURSE



ATHENS HERITAGE WALK
(With augmented reality
& audio storytelling)

REGISTER TODAY!

Don't miss out—secure your spot at:



bit.ly/OOREC_2025

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Supported by Appalachian Regional Commission POWER funding, ORCA is incredibly thankful for our conference planning partners who help make OOREC possible.



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**OHIO OUTDOOR RECREATION
ECONOMY CONFERENCE**

LEARN MORE orcaohio.com/oorec

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Trailblazer Prize Package



Summer 2025 Volume 58 No. 2 Prize:

For this issue, we've got an awesome prize package donated by The Great Ohio Lodges! The winner of this prize package will receive:

A coupon for a FREE, 1 (One) Night Stay + Breakfast for 2 (Two) at any of The Great Ohio Lodges!

A huge shout-out to The Great Ohio Lodges for generously donating this awesome prize! Kindly visit their website by scanning the QR code located above.



Sample

You haven't experienced Ohio until you've stayed at The Great Ohio Lodges. Our nine scenic state park properties serve as destinations for family vacations, weddings, reunions, conferences, weekend retreats, and more. Every property features unique lodging options and outdoor recreation for all ages. Golf, boat, fish, hike, swim—you name it. Everyone has a great time at The Great Ohio Lodges.

Rules:

Throughout this issue of the Trailblazer, there are 7 (Seven) Lodge logos hidden, excluding the sample on this page. Additionally, there is a crossword puzzle on page 17 with ten questions. To enter, please send an email to trailblazer@buckeyetrail.org, providing the correct page numbers for all 7 (Seven) logos and also providing the correct answers to the crossword puzzle. All entries will be entered into a random generator to select a winner.

Congratulations:

A big shout-out to all who took part in the Spring 2025 Volume 58 No. 1 contest! The prize winner was Charlie "Rock" Rohrbacher from the Miami & Erie Canal Chapter! Congrats, we hope you enjoy the awesome gear from Gatewood Appalachia!

Submissions will be accepted until August 15th at 8:00am. 1 (one) submission per membership.



BTA Summer Mushroom Camp

July 25 - 27, 2025

BTA Beall Farmstead

BTA Funds Report

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

FEBRUARY 2, 2025 - MAY 1, 2025

GENERAL FUND

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Preston Bartlett
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Anne Bruner
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Matthew Edmonds
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David Magee
Matthew McClain
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John Ravelly
Timothy Ray
Samuel Schenck & Family
Gary & Beth Schwarzmuller
Richard & Frances Snell
Jim "Sunny" Sunyak

Richard Zappala & Family

**In honor of my sister, Nancy Hoffner, who
just completed an epic hike around the state.**
Judith Chovan

In memory of my brother, James H Brown
Joseph Brown

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:

1/8 Page (3.75" x 2.5")
1/4 Page (3.75" x 5")
1/2 Page (7.5" x 5")
Full Page (7.5" x 10")

For ONE Issue:

\$30.00
\$60.00
\$120.00
\$240.00

For FOUR Issues:

\$90.00
\$180.00
\$360.00
\$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.

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.

Follow us on...



facebook.com/buckeyetrail



BuckeyeTrail.eventbrite.com



youtube.com/user/BuckeyeTrailTV



@buckeyetrailassociation

More Than Just A Trail!

Tammy Craig



As I reflect back on the Buckeye Trail after my completion of this beautiful beast, I can't help but be astonished by how much I gained from her.... When you think of the Buckeye Trail, you think of a hiking trail, but it's so much more than just a trail! Before I started out on the trail, I remember being quite disheartened by humanity. We had just come through the COVID pandemic of isolation with a lot of aggressive perspectives, and a social media boom with a ton of political chaos and discord. It felt like everywhere you turned, the media was pushing an agenda of fear, confusion, and division. The pandemic and all its facets did strain personal relationships, and on top of it, my daughter then had a traumatic injury that only imploded the anxiety and uneasiness I was already feeling. This trail was my saving grace and turned out to be way more than just hiking... it restored my faith in humanity. Aside from the absolute beauty of the trail, it was THE PEOPLE that I loved most about the trail!!!



This is me and Cindy Somers... Cindy was one of the very first people that I picked her brain about the trail and she was so helpful with her knowledge and assistance and helping me get started... we crossed paths on trail in the Stockport Section!

The Journey Begins: Tackling the Beast!

When first starting out on the 1,444+ mile trail, there were a lot of unknowns, but I quickly gained support from fellow BTERS who went out of their way to answer my questions and lead me in the right direction. The disheartening and discord I once was feeling about humanity was now turning into connection from commonality. The hiking community has your back! Whenever I got turned around on the trail, there was always a fellow BTER just a phone call away ready to assist. Whenever I needed a ride, the help was always there! I was blessed to cross paths with 24 different shuttlers over the course of my 851 solo miles spent on the trail. Some helping me on multiple occasions, and they weren't just shuttlers. They were kind, giving souls who volunteered their time and went out of their



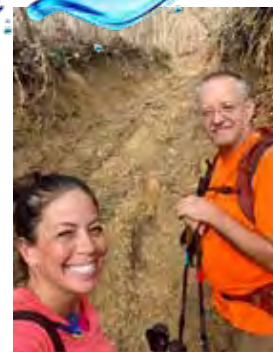
Some of my friends from back home that joined me on a few hikes!!!

south, east, or west, there was always someone there that I could count on. So many strangers along the way offered a helping hand. Offering water, a ride, lodging, or

just their well wishes. I never really felt afraid on the trail, which was so different from the pandemic life I was previously experiencing. The trail brought peace, comfort, and clarity. Where I once had a skewed view of social media and all its political chaos and division was now replaced with a BT platform that was welcoming, optimistic, helpful, and encouraging.

Healing and Renewal on the Buckeye Trail

As I found my way around the trail, it was proving to be much more than a trail. My pandemic wounds and those from my daughter's injury were healing. What once was a global pandemic was now a personal epidemic of my heart for the state of Ohio and its people! It doesn't matter if you're a volunteer, shuttler, or hiker of the trail, the Buckeye Trail connects us! We share something special and for all the right reasons! Forever grateful to this beautiful beast for all the lessons it's taught me and the perspectives gained. You are MUCH more than just a trial... THANK YOU!!!



Richard Morgan just amazes me and I absolutely loved hiking with him. He now holds such a special spot in my heart and he's so knowledgeable about the trail. He was one of the easiest hiking buddies!



So many new hiking friends, and even shuttlers that joined me for my completion hike!

way for ME?! Who got up early, some driving over an hour one way to help a stranger reach their goals... PRICELESS! It was THIS that grabbed my heartstrings, and where my heart once was hardened by my distorted perspective of humanity began to soften. The trail taught me how to trust again... not only in others, but myself!

Building Lifelong Friendships



New faces that I met on trail that made great hiking comrades, and are now life long friends

And it wasn't just shuttlers who found my heart, but it was also the 21 fellow hikers with whom I shared the trail for 597 miles of my BT journey. Meeting most at the trailhead for the first time, and now becoming lifelong friends and comrades. There was great beauty in sharing the trail with others.

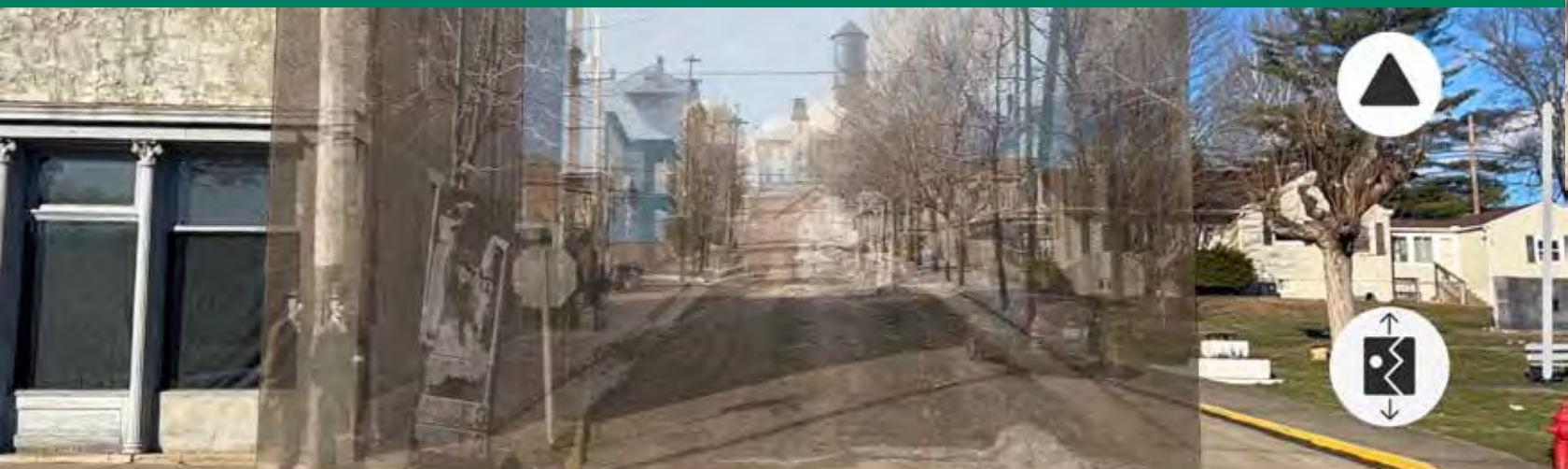
Traversing long miles over many hours, having to trust and rely on each other, forges memorable bonds. This trail brings people together! It didn't matter what corner of the state I was in or if I was north,



Random stranger aka Linda that just pulled over to chat with me in the Road Fork section asking if I needed anything, and found out that she actually has a niece from my hometown... Loved meeting her... it was awesome trail magic!!!

Invisible Ground Makes History Visible on the Trail

Brian Koscho



Based in Athens, Ohio, Invisible Ground is a multimedia project that utilizes audio, augmented reality, visual elements, and place-based storytelling to engage people in their communities' history. Since 2021, Invisible Ground has successfully created 11 Immersive Historic Markers at sites across southeast Ohio, and more are planned for 2025. There are presently 16 podcast episodes, with several more in production. Partnering with the Southeast Ohio History Center in Athens and collaborating with countless other organizations and groups, the project focuses on the region's diverse history and the stories of southeast Ohio's everyday people, places, and events. The accompanying Invisible Ground podcast highlights these stories through engaging documentary storytelling. After downloading the Invisible Ground app on their mobile device, participants will access an augmented reality view of the historical site, overlaying a digital image of the past on top of the present. Accompanying audio in the Invisible Ground app gives the audience an experience that podcast audio alone cannot provide by hearing the voices connected to the story while in the same physical space. It is a multisensory storytelling experience intended to make the past come alive.

At around 1,447 miles long, the Buckeye Trail covers a lot of ground in Ohio and visits many communities of designated Trail Towns. Many people who visit The Buckeye Trail usually find hiking and outdoor recreation to draw them in, giving them a chance to engage with the environmental landscapes of our state differently. And while that may always be the main draw of the BT, an opportunity to slow down and travel on foot also provides a unique way to experience the history and culture of those same places. Important history is present in those Trail Towns, main streets, historic buildings, and the landscape.

One of those Trail Towns, Shawnee, is home to a new Invisible Ground Immersive Historic Markers, which allows visitors



Shawnee Marker

to see three historic images of Main Street. It is also the location of the headquarters of the entire Buckeye Trail, so it is a perfect place to discuss the overlap of history and legacy with modern-day outdoor recreation and expansion in these communities. Shawnee is located in the New Straitsville section of the BT, with a rich history and connections that include the formation of labor unions, unique architecture, immigration, and industry. Founded in 1872, Shawnee's beginnings and growth were aided by the vast deposits of coal, oil, clay, and other minerals in the region, used to fuel the

Industrial Revolution in the United States and beyond. The Knights of Labor was an early labor union that helped miners organize, and Shawnee was home to one of the oldest chapters. By 1881, they would open the Knights of Labor Opera House on Main Street in Shawnee to host entertainment, leisure events, and community gatherings—everything from touring performances to more local examples like basketball games and school dances. This building still stands today on the corner of Main and 2nd Street in Shawnee, and with Invisible



Downtown Shawnee



Historic Downtown Shawnee Circa 1900's

Ground's app, you can see a historic image of this landmark building right there standing on the street. It is one of the country's oldest (if not the oldest) labor union headquarters, and it still stands. In 1890, the Knights of Labor merged with the National Progressive Union to form the United Mine Workers of America, an organization with a monumental legacy. These are massive connections to history in this small town's Main Street outside the Buckeye Trail Headquarters. The history and legacy of Shawnee and the many other Little Cities of Black Diamonds should be presented, experienced, and most importantly, engaged with by both residents and visitors alike.

Now, with the Invisible Ground app and the documentary stories told through its podcast, history and its connection to our past, present, and future can be explored in new ways. Visitors to Shawnee can see the Knights of Labor Opera House as it was over a hundred years ago, while standing firmly in the present day in that same physical space. Standing in the parking space outside the Buckeye Trail Headquarters, visitors can see another historic image through the app by pointing their phone down Main Street toward the Opera House and the even closer Tecumseh Theater. The historical image shows that same street, with many more structures and even more architecture, with countless now gone overhanging second-floor porches joining the few on the landscape today. It provides the opportunity to see the change that a community goes through, the ways it remains the same, and what is essential to preserve for the future.

We can learn so many things from understanding our past, the people who came before us, and how that legacy can be valued into the future. Our communities, history, and shared culture make us who we are, and the hope is that Invisible Ground can be a gateway to those concepts in the same way the Buckeye Trail has served as a gateway to outdoor recreation and environmental stewardship across the state.

Invisible Ground Immersive Historic Markers

The Berry Hotel	15 North Court Street, Athens, OH 45701
Mount Zion Baptist Church	32 West Carpenter Street, Athens, OH 45701
Athens County Courthouse	1 South Court Street, Athens, OH 45701
Soldiers and Sailors Monument	College Green, East Union Street, Athens, OH 45701
Athens Asylum	100 Ridges Cir, Athens, OH 45701

www.buckeyetrail.org

Albany Enterprise Academy	5533 Fire Department Ln, Albany, OH 45710
Tablertown	21200 McGraw Rd, Stewart, OH 45778
Bailey's Trail System	8389 W Bailey Rd, Millfield, OH 45761
Stuart's Opera House	52 Public Square, Nelsonville, OH 45701
Rendville	6460 Valley St, Rendville, OH 43730
Shawnee	116 Main St, Shawnee, OH 43782

Coming Soon

Amesville
Athens Armory
Nelsonville Public Square

The Invisible Ground app is available for Apple or Android devices and can be used at any of the active Immersive Historic Markers listed above. You can get more information, see a map of the markers, and download the app at www.findinvisibleground.com/app

The Invisible Ground podcast currently has 16 episodes including one on the Little Cities of Black Diamonds, and those can be found at invisibleground.simplecast.com or wherever you listen to your favorite podcasts already including Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and more.

For more information visit www.findinvisibleground.com or find us on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube.





Trail Protection Partnership

*Kate Lemon,
Marketing and Communications Manager,
North Country Trail Association*



The North Country Trail Association (NCTA) recently launched a new strategic plan with trail protection at its core. While this work isn't new to our trail community, this is the first time the Association has had capacity to build a true program around it. The main commitment is to protect the trail and its surrounding landscape forever. We are also dedicated to securing a permanent route for the nearly 1,500 miles of trail that are currently not in a guaranteed position; conserving additional land needed to buffer the trail and to enhance your experience; preserving our volunteers' efforts by safeguarding the trail miles they built and work hard to maintain; and advocating for both legislation and funding that adequately support management and protection of the trail.

Guiding Protection Through Expertise:

The NCTA has also formed an official Trail Protection Committee to provide guidance to its staff and board of directors on trail protection policy, strategy, stewardship, and projects. The committee's voting body is composed of land conservation professionals, representatives from Affiliate organizations, and NCTA board members and volunteers from across all eight North Country Trail states. NCTA and National Park Service staff sit on the committee as non-voting liaison members.

Partnering to Secure Shared Trails:

Approximately 1,000 miles of the North Country National Scenic Trail's corridor through Ohio are shared with the Buckeye Trail, meaning the results of these efforts will extend beyond the North Country Trail itself. The NCTA and Buckeye Trail Association (BTA) are collaborating closely to protect scenic, natural, and cultural landscapes, and the miles of trail that have already been built; and your access to these trails. For example, Paul Gagnon, the NCTA Director of Trail Protection, was invited to participate as a member of the BTA's Trail Preservation Committee as an advisor.

Closing Gaps:

There are large gaps in our shared trail corridor across Ohio. These are hikeable miles, but they lack permanent protection, meaning they could disappear tomorrow should landowners make adjustments - pushing more of the trail onto roads. To help mitigate this fate, both organizations are actively conducting outreach to private landowners. When landowners choose to formally allow

the trail to cross their property, they ensure it will remain for future generations to enjoy. They are leaving a legacy, protecting that trail segment forever.

One excellent example of this landowner relationship building is the NCTA Wampum Chapter's Closing the Gaps Committee. This is an innovative volunteer group, among the first to organize a committee to address the fact that land is a limited resource, and if the trail is not guaranteed permanent protection now, there may not be other options in the future. They are choosing to prioritize these conversations with landowners now, before it's too late.

"Our committee meets monthly to review the trail gaps we've decided to focus on," explained Chapter President Dennis Garrett. "We currently have 10 sections on our agenda. Over the last year, thanks to the cooperation of many landowners, we closed two gaps, creating about four new, off-road miles. We are hoping to eliminate another four-mile roadwalk before the end of this year. I'm very appreciative of the 10 folks on this committee who stick with the work."

In Closing:

Stay tuned to both organizations as this work gains momentum. Successes, challenges, and opportunities will absolutely be shared. And remember, this work cannot be done by staff alone! Volunteers, members, donors, landowners, land managers, advocates, and community leaders all play essential roles. Together, we can protect this trail system forever.



The North Country Trail Association (NCTA) is the nonprofit partner of the National Park Service in building, maintaining, and protecting the North Country National Scenic Trail. We organize and equip volunteers, collaborate with land managers, and advocate for support. Our goal is to provide all trail users with a safe and enjoyable experience. The Buckeye Trail Association is an official Affiliate of the NCTA, as more than 1,000 miles of the North Country Trail and Buckeye Trail utilize a shared corridor. Learn more about the NCTA at northcountrytrail.org.



HELP LEAD THE BUCKEYE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Declare your candidacy for the Buckeye Trail Association Board of Trustees by July 15.
Eligibility Requirements in the caption below

CONTACT LORI LUKEN
SECRETARY@BUCKEYETRAIL.ORG

Board Nominations are Open.

June 15th - July 15th

The Buckeye Trail Association is excited to announce that we are seeking nominations for our Board of Trustees! A Trustee must be at least age 18, a member in good standing of the Buckeye Trail Association, and must maintain their membership throughout the term of office. We are seeking nominations from June 15 - July 15. You can declare or ask questions by emailing Lori Luken at secretary@buckeyetrail.org. If you are seeking to declare as a candidate, please also include a 250-word bio about yourself when emailing Lori. Our candidates' announcement and election process update will be coming soon!



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I Support the Buckeye Trail!!!



We'd love to see pictures or a write-up from your incredible events on the Buckeye Trail! Share them with us to help you share your Buckeye Trail story!



facebook.com/bta.trailblazer



@BTA.Trailblazer



trailblazer@buckeyetrail.org

BTA VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Would you like to nominate someone to receive a BTA Volunteer Award?



Categories:

- The Emma "Grandma" Gatewood Award for Distinguished Service
- The Bob Paton Award for Meritorious Service
- The Dr. Roy Fairfield President's Award (This one is selected by the BTA President, but you can still make a recommendation)
- The Bill Miller Award for Conservation
- Buckeye Trail Blazer Award for Leadership by Example
- The James Sprague Buckeye Trail Adopter and Builder Award
- The Merrill Gilfillan Award for Visionary Agency Partners
- The Buckeye Trail Business Partnership Award
- Ralph Regula Award for Leadership
- Certificate of Appreciation



To learn more about the criteria of these awards scan the code to the left, or use the link below to nominate a volunteer, go to

<https://www.buckeyetrail.org/awards.php>

The volunteer award nominations will be due by July 20.



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Cell: 330-635-4846



Michelle Cobb
Realtor®
Cell: 216-702-1110



Crossword Puzzle

All questions can be answered from articles and submissions in this issue. Happy Solving!

Clues:

Across:

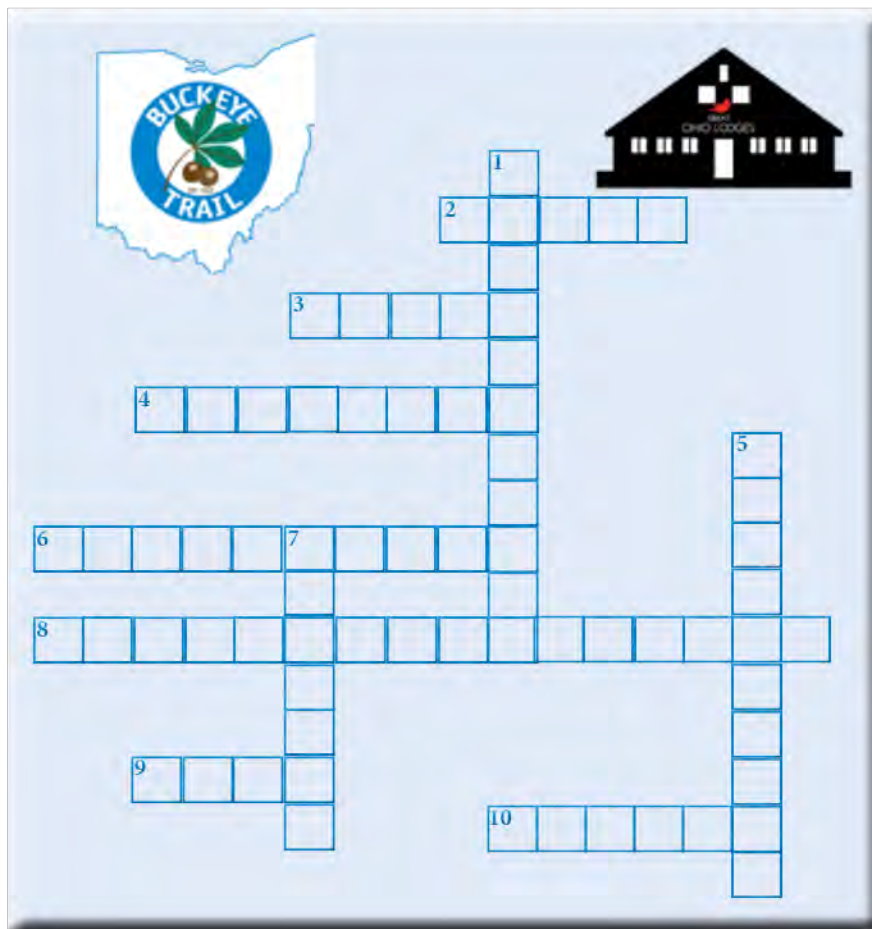
2. The Bob__ Award for Meritorious Service
3. Buckeye Trail Association Volunteer Program Coordinator.
4. The Buckeye Trail passes through, the __ Valley National Park for 16 miles.
6. __, is an Appalachian treat easy to make at home.
8. 245 miles of the BT is on land managed by the Ohio Department of __.
9. Hiking Without __
10. Home of the 2025 Buckeye Trailfest __ Bay.

Down:

1. Tag & Tor want to thank all the Trail __!
5. Woolly Mammoths & other extinct megafauna liked to snack on Ohio's __
7. Invisible Ground is available in what Buckeye Trail Town?

Please Submit your answers to
trailblazer@buckeyetrail.org.

Answers will be in next Issue!



Answers from Spring 2025 Volume 58 NO. 1:

Across: 2. Pond, 4. Florentine, 6. Carsonite 8. Marrow, 10. Anywhere **Down:** 1. Chardon, 3. Mertz, 5. Eventbrite, 6. Downy, 9. Ten
Logo Hunt: 3, 5, 19, 20, 23, 24, 27

Recipes For Happy Hiking

Homemade Applesauce

Caitlin Edwards



Apples have been an Appalachian staple for centuries. Our recipe is simple, healthy, and oh-so-delicious—just apples, a splash of water, and a pinch of cinnamon. Whether I'm savoring it warm after a trek or spooning it out under the trees on a short hike, its sweet-tart goodness feels like home.

Want to try it? Check out our Gatewood Appalachia YouTube channel for a fun tutorial with Granny and me, peeling apples and sharing stories. It's a taste of Appalachia you'll want to take on every adventure!

Share your recipe, trail meal, or cooking hack and get featured right here!

trailblazer@buckeyetrail.org

Ingredients:

- 1 half peck of Apples, your choice we use Golden Rush in the video
- 1 half cup of Water
- Cinnamon and Sweetener to taste!

Preparation:

Wash the apples by rinsing in colander. Next you will have to be careful and peel and remove the core from each apple - you may use a paring knife or an apple peeler, cut each peeled apple into fourths.

Directions:

Add apple fourths to pot, add about a half cup of water, and turn on stove to "High". Let pot sit but check occasionally to ensure that the apples do not dry - add water and turn down stove temperature if necessary.

Taste a sample and add cinnamon or sweetener as desired - in our video we just add cinnamon to taste. Once the apples have become a nice warm mush, remove the pot from the stove and serve. The applesauce is just as delicious warm as cold! We hope you enjoy!



Healing at Hocking

Rebecca Shawhan

A Much-Needed Escape

The weekend of March the 8th, my family and I took a trip to Hocking Hills. Several relatives had gone over the years and came back with rave reviews. Since hiking has consumed a large part of my life over the past four years, and honestly feeling a bit sorry for myself as of late, my husband and I decided to book a long weekend for ourselves and the kids. The trip could not have come at a better time. I would leave feeling relaxed, inspired and ready to put more miles under my feet.

Since January, I was going to the chiropractor three times a week to try and alleviate a mysterious pain that would stiffen my neck and make my head ache. Suddenly sitting in the pew at church and riding in the car became unbearable. Almost making matters worse, I was told I had done nothing wrong...these things can just flair up randomly. On Monday I would leave my appointment with a weight off my shoulders...I was feeling better today! However, by Wednesday I would be in tears because the pain was back and it seemed as if it wasn't getting any better.

Exploring Old Man's Cave and Surroundings



On Friday March 7th we packed the car and then drove the hour and forty minutes to Hocking County. Since the time change wouldn't come till Sunday, we arrived after dark and drove up to the gorgeous new lodge to check into our cabin. The kids were excited to explore the lodge and get into the pool. We found our cabin and quickly returned. Even though I didn't partake in the indoor pool and hot tub that evening, I could already feel myself relaxing. Just a few hours before I was spending the day in a third-grade classroom reviewing math problems...now I was relaxing by a pool in a beautiful new lodge with a

good book. I felt hours away from home.

Saturday, we got out early and started exploring. There were many sites I wanted to see. The parking lot at the Old Man's Cave trailhead is plenty large enough and the visitors center is beautiful. We started here, not a far drive from our cabin. We did not hike the loop since it was chilly and overcast and we didn't pack a lunch either. The cabin was close enough for that and the fireplace too! Not far into the Old Man's Cave trail from the parking lot, we came to Upper Old Man's Cave Falls, a beautiful waterfall with a bridge across the top. We were able to enjoy a crowd-free view and get a lot of good pictures. This is a great waterfall to visit if one can't hike far and over rough terrain. Continuing on, it didn't take long to see the blue blazes of the Buckeye Trail on the trees – another reminder that we really were not too far from home. Not for the first time while traveling in Ohio, I thought to myself, that all I had to do was keep going to this trail and it would eventually lead me home to Sinking Springs and Highland County.

The Simple Joys of Hocking Hills

Next, we passed the Devils Bathtub, a circular swirling tub in the rocks with a sinister name. This is also a beautiful site that can be reached easily. A rock bridge and a tunnel carved into the rock eventually brought us to Old Man's Cave. The kids enjoyed the massive cave structure

and sandy floor imagining what it would be like if you actually had to live there. Not an entirely unappealing idea really. By now the sun was beginning to shine and warm the temperatures a little. Coming out of this hike we found a couple setting up a demonstration of tapping and boiling down maple sap into syrup. We bought a gallon and the kids are still enjoying it on their pancakes. We hiked to Cedar Falls and again enjoyed uninterrupted views. It was just us and a few others listening to the water tumbling down, then taking our time on the trails.



Reflecting on Hiking Obsessions

I guess my hiking lately has been a bit "obsessive". Over the last four years my husband and I have traveled out of state several times and taken longer, more punishing hikes. Just last June we hiked almost 15 miles out and back in one day. In August we completed our first Mammoth March and completed 20 miles in just over eight hours. (Not sure why my neck is the complaining body part and not my knees, but here we are.) I chalk some of this up to a midlife crisis. My mind tells me to do this now while I'm still physically able to. But does every hike have to necessitate a large amount of Ibuprofen?

No, it does not, and that is what Hocking Hills was teaching me.

To be honest I was so relieved these few days weren't huge hiking days. Ones that started with loads of protein at breakfast and leaving a detailed hiking route with my dad in case they didn't hear from us that night. We didn't have to travel so many miles at a certain pace. We were able to enjoy the rock formations, the sun beams through the trees and especially the ice that still clung to certain places on the trail with an icy grip refusing to give up its life for the oncoming spring. It felt good to be cold then go back to the lodge and relax in the hot tub for as long as we wanted to. It felt good to have the trailheads just minutes away instead of almost an hour. It was crowded at Hocking Hills, but not in a way that was a nuisance or an added stress factor. I loved being with my husband and children tucked away in a little cabin on a quiet cul-de-sac of other cabins, just enjoying their company.



"Hiking is always there, timeless and patient—waiting for our trials and ambitions to lead us back to its healing paths."



Lessons Learned and Lasting Impact

As the sun rose on my 41st year around the sun, there were still echoes of pain and stiffness in my neck. By our drive home on Monday afternoon, I didn't notice anything. I did notice that sometimes I need to just enjoy hiking and literally stop and smell the scents around me. I am ready to do that again. To put new miles under my new hiking boots (a birthday present) and that those miles don't all have to be proof of anything.

A Renewed Perspective

Over the years I've discovered so many great things about hiking. One of those is the

realization that hiking is always there waiting for you. Waiting for

you to have the time, health, perfect weather or new piece of gear. It's always there. All the trails are timeless – waiting for our trials and ambitions to take us there. I recommend everyone getting out and finding a blaze to forge ahead and explore, push boundaries, relax and to heal.



Meg's Book Loop

Margaret "Meg" Sondey

"Hiking Without Dave:

A Journey of things found, lost, and remembered along Ohio's Buckeye Trail"

By: CW Spencer,
AMP Light Publishing, 2014.

CW had planned to hike the Buckeye Trail with his brother, Dave. That trip never happened after Dave, "tangled in the overgrowth" and dealing with depression, alcoholism, and addiction, took his own life.

Wrestling with Grief and Guilt on the Buckeye Trail

"Hiking Without Dave" is a deeply personal and revealing book about a brother wrestling with his feelings as he works out the grief and guilt over his brother's death while hiking the Buckeye Trail. However, the book is also a joyous and sometimes comic reminiscence of hiking mishaps and joys that CW shared with other hikers he met along the way, some who became sounding boards and soulmates.



Joyous Reminiscences and New Connections Along the Way

Divided into three major parts "Remembering Innocent Times," "Losing Direction," and "Finding Hope and Healing," CW balances introspective reflections about his relationship with Dave through the years with common Buckeye Trail hiker experiences such as searching for blazes, losing the trail, and finding trail magic. Food...or the lack of it...camping adventures, and BT highlights provide opportunities for those of us who have hiked the BT to recall our own unforgettable experiences on the trail.

CW's writing style is simple and spare but his story profoundly impactful. This is a book to read slowly and carefully, pondering the lessons and insights that CW gained during the journey and has shared with all of us through this book.

"If I can handle the physical part, maybe I will find the courage to deal with the intense sadness and toxic guilt I feel." — CW Spencer





12th Annual Buckeye TrailFest 2025 Maumee Bay Lodge & Conference Center SEPTEMBER 5TH-7TH 2025



A Buckeye Trail Celebration at Maumee Bay State Park

The Buckeye Trail Association invites trail lovers, outdoor enthusiasts, and nature advocates to gather September 5–7, 2025, for **TrailFest 2025**, hosted at the scenic **Maumee Bay State Park** on the shores of Lake Erie.

This year's festival offers a fresh mix of exploration, education, and community, set against the backdrop of one of Ohio's most beautiful state parks. Whether you're a hiker, paddler, birder, trail maintainer, or simply curious about the natural and cultural treasures of Ohio, TrailFest promises a weekend full of connection, learning, and discovery.

A Place to Stay — Lodge Rooms and Campsites Available

As always TrailFest is offering a **camping option available through the online registration**. A limited number of campsites at the Maumee Bay State Park Campground have been reserved exclusively for TrailFest attendees. **These sites will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis**, and early registration is highly recommended to secure your spot.

Those seeking a more comfortable lodging experience can stay at the **Maumee Bay Lodge and Conference Center**, located within the park. The lodge offers a range of accommodations — from double queens and king rooms to family bunk rooms and cabins — all close to the park's golf course and nature center. The address for the lodge is **1750 State Park Road #2, Oregon, OH 43616**.

**Special Note: Registered Trailfest Participants will receive a special code for the reduced rates. Members will have to either call Maumee Bay Lodge, go to <https://www.maumeebaylodge.com/> lodging to reserve a Lodge room using the code.*

Exploring the Great Black Swamp: Friday Fun Day

TrailFest's signature **Friday Fun Day** experience will take



participants off-site to explore the **Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge** and **Magee Marsh Wildlife Area**, two jewels of Northwest Ohio's wetland ecosystem.

Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge spans more than 11,000 acres of wetlands, forests, and grasslands — a globally significant area for migratory birds and other wildlife. Established in 1961, the refuge plays a key role in wetland conservation and habitat protection. Participants will enjoy a **guided tour on an open-air tram**, offering an immersive

introduction to the ecology of the Great Black Swamp, the Lake Erie coastline, and the ongoing conservation work led by federal, state, and nonprofit partners.

The group will also visit the newly renovated **Magee Marsh Visitor Center**, which features accessible exhibits and impressive dioramas showcasing over 150 species of mounted birds. Additional opportunities include a guided hike or paddle, allowing guests to further connect with this unique natural environment.

Saturday Programming: Learning, Community, and Fun

Saturday's programming brings the focus back to Maumee Bay State Park with a full day of presentations, activities, and social



"With its mix of outdoor adventure, educational enrichment, and meaningful community, TrailFest 2025 is more than a weekend — it's a celebration of Ohio's trails, landscapes, and the people who care for them. Whether you're joining us for a hike, a paddle, a presentation, or a campfire, we can't wait to welcome you to Maumee Bay."



gatherings. Presenters from across Ohio will share stories and expertise on a range of topics that celebrate the **history, nature, and conservation efforts** of the region.

The Maumee Bay State Park Nature Center will host a series of educational programs, and guests can look forward to a **silent auction, evening campfires**, and informal gatherings that spark conversation and camaraderie.

Sunday: Buckeye Trail Association Annual Meeting

The weekend concludes on Sunday with the Buckeye Trail Association's **Annual Meeting**, including board elections and updates on the organization's progress and future direction. All attendees are welcome to observe or participate in the meeting and connect with BTA leadership and fellow members.

Call for Presenters: Share Your Knowledge and Passion

Do you have a story, skill, or topic to share? The TrailFest planning committee is currently **accepting presenter applications** for TrailFest 2025. Topics of interest include:

- Hiking, paddling, backpacking, or camping
- Trail maintenance and outdoor stewardship
- Ecology, geology, and local wildlife
- Natural or cultural history of the Buckeye Trail region
- Outdoor photography, art, music, or storytelling
- Inclusive outdoor communities and experiences

Presentations may take the form of workshops, panels, demos, lectures, or creative alternatives. Selected presenters will receive **complimentary TrailFest registration and lunch** on Saturday.

Proposals are due by July 1, 2025:

<https://forms.gle/NVE6p6GgeXZQ4xUXA>

For more information, contact the organizing team at:

trailfest@buckeyetrail.org.



Partners:





MAUMEE BAY PARK MAP



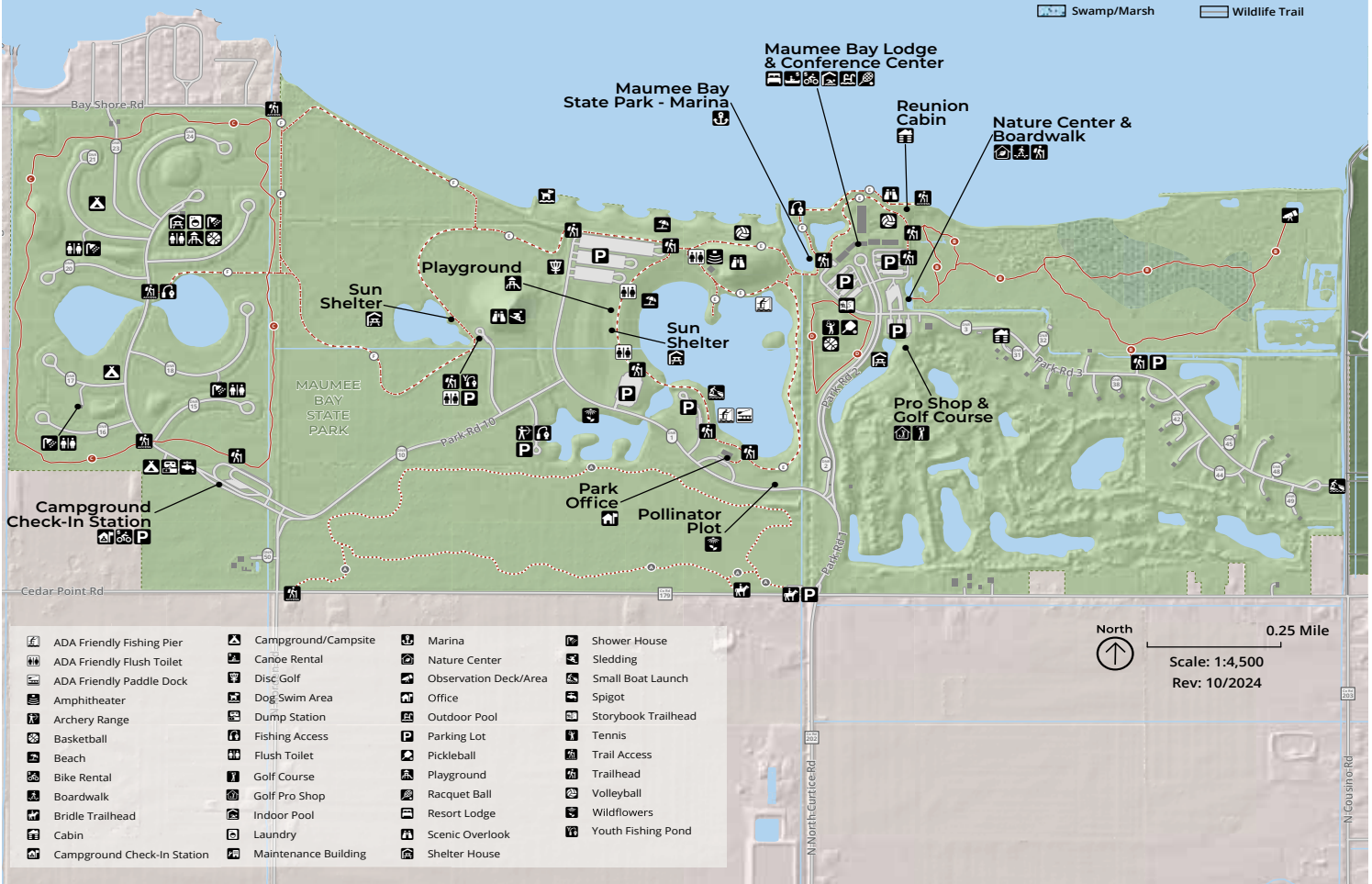
Trail Name	Total Length	Difficulty	Blaze Color	Allowed Uses
Equestrian Trail	2.4 mi	Moderate	None	Hiking, Bicycling, Equestrian
Boardwalk Trail	1.8 mi	Easiest	None	Hiking, Bicycling, Equestrian
Mouse Trail	2.4 mi	Moderate	None	Hiking, Bicycling, Equestrian
Storybook Trail	0.5 mi	Easy	None	Hiking, Bicycling, Equestrian
Inland Lake Trail	3.0 mi	Easiest	None	Hiking, Bicycling, Equestrian
Lake Erie Bike Path	2.1 mi	Easiest	None	Hiking, Bicycling, Equestrian

Lake Erie
Unlimited HP

No pets allowed on the indicated trails.

State Park
State Wildlife Area
Unlimited HP
Swamp/Marsh

Equestrian Trail
Hiking/Walking Trail
Multi-use Trail
Wildlife Trail



SWIMMING IS PERMITTED DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS ONLY.



CONSIDER THE DIFFICULTY OF TRAILS.



DOGS MUST BE LEASHED AND NOT PERMITTED ON THE BEACH.



PACK OUT WHAT YOU PACK IN AND DISPOSE OF TRASH.



EMERGENCIES CALL 911

NON-EMERGENCIES CALL #ODNR FOR A NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICER

A Diamond in the Rough: Biodiversity in the Appalachian Hills Wildlife Area

Morgan Thomas



Discovering a Special Tree

My first clue that I had found something special was a tree. Normally, that's not something to write home about when I see it along a hiking trail in Ohio. Roughly 35% of our beautiful state is forest, after all. But not all forests in Ohio were created equal, and neither were the trees. Much of Ohio was deforested by 1900, and though we've made tremendous progress in reforesting our Appalachian counties, industry and agriculture have left their marks. Many of us are old enough to remember a large portion of Morgan, Muskingum, and Noble counties as the AEP Power Lands, an enormous 60,000-acre stretch of interconnected surface mines that were used to fuel the Muskingum River Power Plant between 1969 and 1991. As the Central Ohio Coal Company's use of Big Muskie (whose enormous bucket is now part of Miner's Memorial Park on OH-78) wound down, AEP began the process of allowing nature to reclaim the land.

Historical Context: Ohio's Deforestation and Reclamation:

Much of this type of reclamation work consists of restoring the land to natural contours, bringing in topsoil, stabilizing that soil, creating ponds and streams, and replanting vegetation. Sounds simple enough, right? Well, part of stabilizing soil in reclaimed mine lands involves planting species of vegetation that can grow and spread quickly, and are tolerant of poor, thin soils. Their fast-growing root systems draw in water and prevent the loose, bare soil from being carried off by the wind and rain. One plant that was found to excel at this job was *Elaeagnus umbellata*, commonly known



as Autumn Olive. A full exploration of Autumn Olive and its invasive qualities in Ohio is a topic for another article, but suffice it to say it has become ubiquitous in what AEP called its ReCreation Land Project.

In the years since the establishment of the ReCreation Lands, Autumn Olive has also been joined by other non-native invasives that love disturbed areas, such as *Ailanthus altissima* (Tree-of-Heaven),



Lonicera spp. (multiple species of Bush Honeysuckle), and *Rosa multiflora* (Multiflora rose), creating a patchwork ecosystem in which many Ohio native plant species struggle to establish themselves.

The Significance of the White Oak:

So what does all this have to do with that tree I mentioned at the beginning of this article? It was a mature *Quercus alba*, a White Oak, over twenty inches in diameter. And it wasn't alone. As I looked around, a little over a mile north of Stockport Point 5, I found evidence of selective timber harvest in a mature stand of classic Appalachian hardwood forest, but none of the telltale signs of mining reclamation. The very southern section of the Power Lands, it seems, escaped Big Muskie's bucket, and remains a true gem of Ohio native plants.

Joining the white oaks were ranks of Black Oak (*Quercus velutina*), Mockernut Hickory (*Carya*





tomentosa), Shagbark Hickory (*Carya ovata*), Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*), American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), American Hophornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*), and much to the delight of our group, a Yellow Buckeye (*Aesculus flava*), growing right on the trail. In the cool shade of this hardwood canopy were many understory friends you would recognize from the Hocking Hills region and the Athens Unit of Wayne National Forest: Trillium, Hepatica, Sweetroot, Stonecrop, Bloodroot, Violets, Wild Ginger, Mayapples, Sensitive Fern, Maidenhair Fern, Broad Beechfern, and Spicebush, just to name a few. I couldn't take more than a few steps before finding something new to babble on about to my companions, who had come out to survey the trail as part of a BTA work party. It was truly incredible to stumble into a pocket of native biodiversity on the edge of the expanse of invasive species in the reclaimed mines.

Conservation and Future Developments:

Since the Ohio Department of Natural Resources took over management of the old ReCreation Lands in 2018, turning them into Jesse Owens State Park and Wildlife Area and the much larger

Appalachian Hills Wildlife Area, the whole region is changing. New camping facilities, plumbing, boat ramps, and trails are being built. More changes will surely come, and I can't wait to see the small stand of hardwoods and understory friends we found slowly expand and grow, reducing and finally obscuring the scars of the mines, leaving only the forest in its place.



Ohio's Gems

Morgan Thomas, OCVN

Kentucky Coffeetree (*Gymnocladus dioica*)

One of the most fascinating of Ohio's many rare and ancient plants is the Kentucky Coffeetree (*Gymnocladus dioica*). While they have a large distribution range, they are not a common sight in our Appalachian hardwood forests. They tend to prefer floodplains and limestone soils, but can be found in cool, moist ravines and hollows in parts of Ross, Vinton, and Hocking counties. They are also what we call an "evolutionary anachronism," meaning that they evolved to be part of an ecosystem that no longer exists. Coffeetrees are dioecious legumes (individuals are either male or female), and their large, leathery pods grow high on their branches: too high up for deer to browse and too large and tough for squirrels to eat, but perfect for say, a Woolly Mammoth or other megafauna to snack on. These extinct mammals would eat the Coffeetrees' pods, scraping up the seeds as they did, and excrete them in another location, thus helping to disperse the species' seeds (a process called zoochory). With their animal partners gone, Coffeetrees have struggled to spread, and mostly exist in small, widely dispersed colonies or as individuals. Look for their distinctive scaly dark gray bark, bipinnately compound leaves (think honey locust) and large (6" plus) pods. And yes, the roasted seeds can be ground up to make something resembling coffee, but I think it's much more fun to play Woolly Mammoth by gathering them up and planting them in different parts of the forest.



Kentucky Coffeetree (*Gymnocladus dioica*) as seen on points 14-15, OMC Section Buckeye Trail. The gorge of the Big Rocky Fork of Big Pine Creek.

Schedule of Hikes & Events

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

JUNE

June 28, 2025,

Ohio River Chapter — Loveland and Williamsburg Sections

Description: Mathers Mill before Loveland pt25 to Flat Fork Ridge near Caesar Creek pt3

Meeting Details: We will meet at Flat Fork Ridge Trailhead parking, then group shuttle with as few cars as possible to the ODNR access at Mathers Mill off Corwin Rd and will walk back. Length is about 8 miles perhaps a bit more. Expect a relaxed and easy pace. This hike covers the end of Loveland section through Oregonia to the point where the trail leaves the bike path and takes some roads to enter Caesar Creek Gorge State Nature Preserve and we mostly stay in this until we hit the road and are back at the cars at Flat Fork Ridge Trailhead.

Meeting Location: 9:00AM meet at Flat Fork Ridge Trailhead, 3466 North Clarksville Road, Waynesville, Ohio.

Signup: Register on Eventbrite at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ohio-river-chapter-hike-june-tickets-1360601578949>

JULY

July 5, 2025,

Crooked River Chapter — Burton Section Little Loop Circuit Hike

Description: The Crooked River Chapter is planning to circuit hike the Little Loop by sections. This first series of hikes takes place in the Burton Section. There will be one hike a month.

Meeting Details: Meeting times will be 8:30 am. We will meet at the endpoint, then take half the cars to the start point. We will hike back to the endpoint, when those that left cars there will shuttle the others back to their cars. Be prompt. We will leave for the start point at 8:30.

Hike Dates:

— July 5, 2025, Burton Pts 18-22, 10.0 miles

— August 2, 2025, Burton Pts 22-27, 11.4 miles

— September 27, 2025, Burton Pts 27-32, 10.8 miles

Registration: Registration is required on our Eventbrite site at <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/buckeye-trail-crooked-river-chapter-104389691301>

Contact: Additional information is available on the EventBrite site listed above. If you need to contact the leader, please email the Crooked River Chapter at crookedriver@BuckeyeTrail.org

July 8th

Crooked River Chapter Virtual Membership Meeting

Description: Join us for a review of upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. We'll focus on finalizing plans for the Little Loop Challenge!

Don't miss out on this opportunity to be part of the Crooked River Chapter family. Mark your calendar and make sure to log in on time for this virtual event. We look forward to seeing you there!

Time: Tuesday, July 8 · 7:00p.m. - 9:00p.m.

Meeting Details: To Be Announced, please register on Eventbrite, A link to the meeting will be sent closer to the date.

Contact: Additional information is available on the EventBrite site listed above. If you need to contact the leader, please email the

www.buckeyetrail.org

Crooked River Chapter at crookedriver@BuckeyeTrail.org

July 10th

Buckeye Trail Ohio River Chapter Quarterly Meeting (Virtual)

Description: Ohio River Chapter quarterly administrative meeting

Time: Thursday, July 10 · 7:30 – 8:30pm

Meeting Details: Meeting will be on Google Meetup, please register on Eventbrite

Contact: Additional information is available on the EventBrite site listed above. If you need to contact the leader, please email the Ohio River Chapter at ohioriver@BuckeyeTrail.org

July 12, 2025

Forest Frolic Trail Run and Hike Findley State Park — Wellington, OH

Description: Celebrate summer on the trails at Findley State Park with this scenic trail race and hike around Findley Lake. The course features forested paths, stream crossings, and a few short, steep hills—perfect for hikers and runners alike. All proceeds benefit the Friends of Findley State Park, supporting improvements to park facilities, environmental education, and natural habitat preservation. The event includes a 5 and 10 K run, a 5 K hike, and a 1 mi Fun Run.

Registration: [https://runsignup.com/Race/OH/Wellington/](https://runsignup.com/Race/OH/Wellington/ForestFrolicTrailRaceHike)

[ForestFrolicTrailRaceHike](https://runsignup.com/Race/OH/Wellington/ForestFrolicTrailRaceHike)

Volunteer Opportunity: The Lake Plains Chapter is looking for volunteers to help staff the water station during the event. For more details email lakeplains@buckeyetrail.org

July 12-16, 2025

Road Fork and Whipple Sections Work Party

Description: Join The Wilderness Chapter and the Buckeye Trail Association for it's annual work party covering the Road Fork and Whipple Sections. This project will focus mostly on widening segments of the off-road trail in the Wayne National Forest in the Ohio Valley region (Marietta Unit).

Location and Camping: Little Muskingum Watershed Association property at 9 Thomas Ridge Rd, off OH 26, New Matamoras, Ohio 45767 beginning on the evening of Friday, July 11th. You do not have to stay for the entire event and you can commute to our volunteer sites if you wish. The daily plan and safety meeting is daily after breakfast at 7:30am.

Meals: The chuckwagon will be there to provide all meals to a limited number of people. Please reserve a spot for the chuckwagon when you register to attend. There is a limited number of these that we can take. If you do not reserve the chuck wagon, you will need to pack your own food.

Camping: Camping is at Little Muskingum Watershed Association property. If you plan to stay overnight with us, RV's are welcome, but boondocking should be anticipated. For others, please bring a tent, sleeping bag and either a sleeping pad, or cot. With a cot, you can get an indoor accommodation, but these are limited. You may be parking in a field. And remember to fill your water tank(s) before you arrive.

The Little Muskingum Watershed Association is a large grassy property on the side of Ohio State Route 26 in Ludlow

Hikes & Events (continued)

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

Township of Washington County, Ohio. There is room for lots of tents. At this site, showers and toilets are provided, but drinking water isn't and you should bring your own.

What to Bring: Long sleeved shirts, long pants, tools if you have them, gloves, insect repellent, rain gear AND your own water.

Registration: Please sign up for the work party at

Contact: The Wilderness Chapter Leader at matthew.edmonds@BuckeyeTrail.org with any questions.

July 19-20, 2025

BTA Board of Trustees & Staff Retreat

Description: Located at the BTA Beall Farmstead on Tappan Lake - Live and Virtual using WebEx.

Contact: Email BTA Board of Trustees President, Steve Walker, at president@BuckeyeTrail.org with any questions.

July 19, 2025

Chapter Leadership Summit at BTA Board of Trustees & Staff Retreat

Description: Located at the BTA Beall Farmstead on Tappan Lake. 7:00 P.M. - Live and Virtual using Google Meet

Contact: Email BTA Board of Trustees President, Steve Walker, at president@BuckeyeTrail.org with any questions.

July 23 – August 3, 2025

Ohio State Fair

Description: The Buckeye Trail Association will be back at the Ohio State Fair with our friends at ODNR. The Ohio State Fair will be held this year from July 23 through August 3 at the The Ohio Expo Center & State Fair in Columbus, Ohio.

Volunteer: Join us in representing the Buckeye Trail Association at this year's Ohio State Fair! BTA volunteers will be manning an informational table in the ODNR Park at the Ohio State Fairgrounds. Whether you are new to volunteering or a seasoned trail crew veteran, we need your help educating fairgoers about who we are and what we do, and raising public awareness of the Buckeye Trail to new heights. Sign up to volunteer here.

Contact: Email the Central Ohio Chapter at CentralOhio@BuckeyeTrail.org with any questions.

July 25-27, 2025

BTA Summer Mushroom Camp

Description: Located at the BTA Beall Farmstead on Tappan Lake. Join us for a weekend of fungi-filled fun at the BTA Summer Mushroom Camp! Whether you're a seasoned forager or just curious about mushrooms, this relaxed and educational weekend is a great way to connect with nature, learn new skills, and enjoy good company.

Activities include: Foraging Hikes, Kayaking, Saturday Potluck Dinner — Bring a dish to share!

Stay tuned for more details!

Event Details: Visit the Eventbrite site for all the details.

AUGUST

August 2-6, 2025

New Straitsville Section Work Party

Description: This project is part of the Amler and Forest Service grants for building new trail. The Trail Crew leaves camp at 8:00am to head out on the trail.

Location and Camping: Burr Oak Cove Campground is located a half mile E of Highway 13, via Burr Oak Rd to Wayne National Forest Rd. Drinking water and toilets available.

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

What to Bring: Long sleeved pants, shirts, tools if you have them, gloves, insect repellent, and rain gear.

Registration: Please sign up for the work party at <https://app.etapestry.com/onlineforms/BuckeyeTrailAssociationInc/volevent2025.html>

Contact: The New Straitsville Section supervisor at newstratisville@BuckeyeTrail.org with any questions.

August 10 ·

Central Ohio Chapter Annual Cookout

Description: Join us for our Annual Cookout and Chapter Elections. The cookout is a wonderful time to socialize with other Chapter members and share out Buckeye Trail experiences. After the cookout, stay for our Annual Chapter Meeting where we'll discuss upcoming plans and hold elections for key leadership positions. The officer positions of Chair and Recorder-Treasurer will be elected alongside additional At-Large members of the Leadership Committee. **The Cookout will begin at 12pm at Blendon Woods Metro Park. The Annual Chapter Meeting will begin at 2pm.*

What To Bring: We'll provide the hot dogs and we ask you to bring a side dish or dessert to share.

Location: Blendon Woods, 4265 E Dublin Granville Road Columbus, OH 43081

Time: 12:00pm-3:00pm

Contact: If you have any questions, please reach out to CentralOhio@BuckeyeTrail.org.

SEPTEMBER

September 5-7, 2025

Buckeye TrailFest 2025

Description: The 12th annual Buckeye TrailFest is scheduled for September 5-7, 2025 at Maumee Bay State Park on the shore of Lake Erie.

Save the Date!

September 7, 2025

BTA Board of Trustees Meeting During TrailFest

Description: About 10:00 A.M. at Maumee Bay Lodge & Conference Center - Live and Virtual using WebEx

Contact: Email BTA Board of Trustees President, Steve Walker, at president@BuckeyeTrail.org with any questions.



Interested in Chapter-specific events/hikes?

Go to buckeyetrail.org/chapters to find your local chapter. You may find Chapter-led events and hikes posted on Chapter social media (Facebook, Meetup, or Instagram) or shared via Chapter newsletters.

September 26-27, 2025

Blue Blaze Festival in Shawnee, Ohio

Description: The Village of Shawnee, will be hosting the Buckeye Trail "Blue Blaze Festival" bringing together many in the outdoor recreational community.

On Saturday, there will be a full day of activities. Since 2015, the Buckeye Trail Association has held a trail run in the Wayne National Forest on the Buckeye Trail. The previous runs included a marathon, half marathon, 10K and 5K distances. In 2021 the planning team restructured the event to include a day hike as a way to encourage more people to get out and enjoy the trail. The event now includes the 8-mile hike, plus the 5K, 10K and Half Marathon trail runs on the Buckeye Trail, all starting and finishing on Main Street.

Registration: Registration is open at <https://runsignup.com/Race/OH/Shawnee/RunForBlueBlazes>

Contact: The Little Cities of the Forest Chapter at littlecities@BuckeyeTrail.org with any questions.

OCTOBER

October 14th

Crooked River Chapter Virtual Membership Meeting

Description: Join us online for an evening of updates, discussions, and networking with fellow members. This is your chance to stay informed about upcoming events, share your ideas, and connect with

other outdoor enthusiasts in our community.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to be part of the Crooked River Chapter family. Mark your calendar and make sure to log in on time for this virtual event. We look forward to seeing you there!

Time: Tuesday, October 14th 8 - 9:00p.m. - 9:00p.m.

Meeting Details: To Be Announced, please register on Eventbrite, A link to the meeting will be sent closer to the date.

Contact: Additional information is available on the EventBrite site listed above. If you need to contact the leader, please email the Ohio River Chapter at crookedriver@BuckeyeTrail.org

NOVEMBER

November 6, 2025

Chapter Leadership Summit

Description: 7:00 P.M. - Live and Virtual using Google Meet

Contact: Email BTA Board of Trustees President, Steve Walker, at president@BuckeyeTrail.org with any questions.

November 13, 2025

BTA Board of Trustees Meeting

Description: 7:00 P.M. - Live and Virtual using WebEx

Contact: Email BTA Board of Trustees President, Steve Walker, at president@BuckeyeTrail.org with any questions.

More online at buckeyetrail.org/events.php

eventbrite

The Buckeye Trail Association and its Chapters are now using Eventbrite to keep everyone in the loop about upcoming events. Whether you're interested in what's happening with the BTA as a whole, want to join a circuit hike, or just want to know what's going on in your local chapter, simply scan the QR codes below for more info!

Buckeye Trail Association



Circuit Hikes



Miami Rivers Chapter



Miami & Erie Canal Chapter



Appalachian Foothills Chapter



Lake Plains Chapter



Muskingum Lakes Chapter



Central Ohio Chapter



Crooked River Chapter



Ohio River Chapter



The Wilderness Chapter



Little Cities of the Forest



Buckeye Trail Association

*P.O. Box 5
Shawnee, Ohio 43782*

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Not a member of the
BTA, yet? Just scan the
QR code to get to the
website's membership
page and join today!



Ohio's Trail. A Global Treasure. Your Legacy.

**The Buckeye Trail is bigger than any
one of us. This is our history.**

How will you be a part of this legacy?

So many have given, in so many ways, to make Ohio's BT and the BTA what we are today. Please share your Buckeye Trail adventures, why you give, and questions about leaving a legacy for tomorrow through the BTA's Blue Blaze Society today.

**Join us in sharing our gift to the world for generations
to come!**



*development@
buckeyetrail.org*