Hitting a Home Run with our Volunteer Challenge!

Barry Unger

October 1st has come and gone. This date may not mean much to you, but for me and our partner groups, it is the date on which we tally the volunteer hours from the past year and start on our reporting! Last year we pledged to work 10,000 hours on the Buckeye Trail through trail work, events, and backroom projects. I am proud to say that our volunteers worked over 14,430 hours to build, maintain, protect and promote the Buckeye Trail! This means that all of you worked to donate $324,675 worth of work to Ohio’s outdoor community. Your efforts do what the BTA and any other organization could never do on its own and we say Thank You!

So what is the next goal for our family of volunteers? How about recording 20,000 hours by October 1, 2016? I believe that this is a goal that we can not only meet, but once again blow out of the water! How you ask? Keep doing what you are doing and record your hours in the Volunteer Portal. If you have not registered yet, take a few moments to do so. Registering does not commit you to any project or role within the BTA; it simply allows us to notify you when opportunities arise. Click the “Register as a Volunteer Now” link at the bottom of www.buckeyetrail.org.

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Hitting a Home Run with our Volunteer Challenge!

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Please contact other organizations who work along the Buckeye Trail and put them into contact with me. Groups such as State Park Friends Groups or Rail Trail groups have volunteers out there working on the BT and we want to capture their hours. Not only does this give us a realistic number of hours spent on the trail, but it allows us to highlight the great work that they are doing.

Why is this so important?—bragging rights for one reason. We have the hardest-working volunteers out there and I want every Ohioan to know just how hard all of you work for their state trail. Funding is another huge reason. I am constantly looking for grants that we can use to support our activities, whether it is for training, tools, equipment here at the office or even t-shirts. Every hour that we record is used for matching in those grants and any other ones that Richard, Andrew and I go after.

On a final note, June 4th, 2016 is National Trails Day. I am putting out another challenge to our volunteers, hikers, and administration as a whole—to maintain the whole BT in one day!

Thank You all for the hard work that you put into this trail that we all love so much. 2015 was truly an impressive year and I can’t wait to see what 2016 has in store for us.

Barry Unger
BTA Volunteer Coordinator

Photo by Todd Nystrom

Flat Fork Creek frozen falls

Check us out...

trailtalk.buckeyetrail.org  @buckeyetrailassociation  buckeyetrailfriends.org

youtube.com/user/BuckeyeTrailTV  twitter.com/hikethebt  facebook.com/buckeyetrail

BTA Trailblazer  Winter 2015
Buckeye Trail volunteers were busy during September. First, seventeen came to Dayton to assist with the 2nd Annual Market to Market Relay. This is a relay race from Milford to Dayton. The teams were composed of 6 runners who ran a total of 75 miles with 17 hand-off points. 1300 runners competed the race. Our responsibility was at the finish line. Volunteers showed up at 9AM to lift and tote boxes and duffels of materials. We hung flags, put together fencing, and prepared displays. The 2nd shift came at 2PM and they were busy with duties such as computer input, directing runners and helping keep the venue clutter free. Some of these volunteers were there for the end of the day duties, tear down and put away. And…..for their efforts, the Buckeye Trail received a donation of $1100 from event organizers. Those volunteers were: Dave Pond, Kathleen Judy, Bob and Ruth Brown, Mary Hamilton (who was there ALL day), Scott and Mary Anne Kamph, Randall, Geoff, Beth and Renee Roberts, John Lee, MaryEllen Beardmore, Lori Davis, Nan Allen, Andrew Bashaw and Connie and Bob Pond. Keep September 10, 2016 open—we would love to have your help!

On September 26, we had the grand unveiling of the “ROCK” at the entrance to Headlands Dunes State Nature Preserve. In the picture, you can see the bronze plaque that commemorated the completion of the Buckeye Trail from Lake Erie to the Ohio River. While the historic ceremony was a Mogadore Reservoir, the plaque is enshrined as the monument to the Northern Terminus where thousands of visitors to the lake will see it each year. The project was spear headed by Pat Hayes and his trusty assistant Bob Morecki (see Pat’s article on page 10). A number of trips were made to “rock stores” to find the perfect boulder and then to design the perfect inscription. We had excellent cooperation with ODNR representative Adam Wohlever who is the NE Regional Preserve Manager. It was an outstanding job!

There were over 50 guests at the ceremony, including honored guests Velda Vogt and Representative John Rogers. In the picture, Velda, her family, and Representative Rogers are standing just behind the rock. The Master of Ceremony, Andrew Bashaw read a commendation from the Ohio legislature, prepared by Senator Kenny Yuko. It was a grand event! Those who generously donated to the project are: Lynda Warner, Mary Hamilton, Cliff Thorniley, William McGovern, Scott and Mary Anne Kamph, Bob and Connie Pond and the very first contributor... Velda Vogt.

Side Note:
The boulder was set on a Tuesday before the Saturday ceremony. Bob Morecki made a trip back to the site each day, to make sure the rock was still there. You can relax now, Bob, it will be there for a long, long time.

BTA members and friends gather for rededication
It “seems” like things are beginning to slow down on the Buckeye Trail as winter begins to creep into the Buckeye State after a flurry of activity at the “end” of a very busy year. As members of the BTA we have a lot to be proud of this year.

Because of the commitment of BTA members like you, we were able to leverage additional support from REI, and achieved our Volunteer Challenge and then some. Included in our 14,000+ volunteer hours were many organized Buckeye Trail Crew Work Parties where miles of the BT were newly built and maintained, including at the end of the season at Boch Hollow State Nature Preserve in Hocking County. We cleaned up our rosters, gained 3 new Section Supervisors and nearly 20 new Trail Adopters this year! Please welcome Section Supervisors Tom Rohr (Road Fork), Matthew Edmonds (Whipple), and Fern Truitt (Sinking Springs), who have hit the trail running and are in need of Buckeye Trail Adopters.

We witnessed a touching moment at Headlands Dunes State Nature Preserve during the re-dedication of the Buckeye Trail to the citizens of Ohio on the 45th anniversary of our then 500-mile trail being completed. Thanks to BTA member Velda Vogt, volunteers and State Nature Preserve staff, we installed an engraved boulder and 45-year-old bronze plaque at the northern terminus of the BT on a beautiful fall day. Thanks to your support this spring, and that of the Columbus Foundation, we have already garnered six new camping locations along the BT including a new shelter on the Miami & Erie Canal. On down the towpath, the city of Troy recently joined the small but growing list of communities in our developing Buckeye Trail Town Program!

On a rainy day in October we held the first of what looks to be an annual “Run for the Blue Blazes” Marathon Trail Run from the BTA office in the Village of Shawnee. Around the BT, hike leaders such as Jim Gilkey and Randall Roberts have been introducing new hikers to the Buckeye Trail experience on their quest to hike the whole trail. These are just a few of the most visible accomplishments that immediately come to mind. With a staff of three, or two full-time equivalents, it is obvious that Volunteers continue to be the lifeblood of the BTA.

I say “seems” to be slowing down because in reality this is the time of year that we “gear up” for the year ahead; there isn’t really an “end” to the good work of the BTA. The Buckeye Trail Crew has set their ambitious calendar of 2016 Work Parties, a 2016 Volunteer Challenge has been conceived, and dates are being set for the BTA to speak, present, exhibit and hike throughout the year. With such an expansive trail we are easily engaged in much more than 52 activities in a year. The amount of activity and enjoyment of Buckeye Trail experiences is truly awe-inspiring!

It is also the time of year that we ask ourselves to chip in towards next year’s goals. Because BTA members contributed last fall and volunteered throughout the year, we were able to leverage a huge return in the value of volunteer services as well as nearly $20,000 in grants and sponsorships to help pay for materials, equipment, feeding volunteers, staff time and more. This past year we focused our efforts on building up our BTA Volunteer Program through the “Year of the Volunteer” with great (continuing!) success thanks to the initial investment of BTA members to kick-start the process. Thank you!

In the upcoming year we’re kick-starting a renewed focus on Hiking the BT and growing our membership. We invite you to engage with what we’re calling our “Live, Breathe and Hike the BT” campaign to focus our volunteer and staff efforts on increasing membership, volunteerism, and hiking on the BT. First and foremost we want you to enjoy the BT, and make all that volunteer effort worthwhile by getting your friends and family out on the trail! Secondly, we hope that you will not only renew your membership this year but consider giving the gift of membership to someone who you think would be inspired by the places that the BT leads us to and by the people of the BTA actively developing and promoting it. Finally, the BTA needs all the volunteer effort we can muster for all sorts of work—be sure to register as a volunteer so you can be notified of the opportunities ranging from photography and campaign development to leading hikes and hands on trail building. There’s something for everyone.

Ohio’s Buckeye Trail is our trail, it’s up to us to sustain it and create its future. The year ahead is already shaping up to be a banner year for new trail developments and trail adventures. We want you to be as much a part of it as you can handle. Thank you for all you do for the BT.

Hope to see you on the Buckeye Trail this Winter!
Backpacking the Caesar’s Creek Section
Ty Eng

“Hell yeah, that sounds awesome!” is the all-too-familiar phrase when one of us comes up with a grandiose idea. Originally friends from work, we have found ourselves separated by miles and other employment, but our desire to push our personal limits, and to connect with each other and with nature have remained strong over the years. On Labor Day weekend, we embarked on a 55 mile backpacking journey to complete the Caesar’s Creek section of the Buckeye Trail. Filled with excitement and doubts as we hoisted our 40+ lbs. packs on our backs at the covered bridge on Corwin Road, we posed for a couple quick pictures, thanked our gracious shuttle driver Nan, and began our personal and collective journey that tested our bodies, our will, and our mental fortitude.

This section of the trail boasted rolling hills on paved public roads and rail-trails. Once in the forest, the trail was adequately marked and it was easy to discern which direction to take at most intersections. The combination of the map and trail descriptions allowed for fairly easy navigation using landmarks, road signs, and of course, the blue blazes between check points. Traveling from south to north on the trail, we arrived at the beach at Caesar’s Creek Lake about six hours after we started where we refueled and rehydrated. From there we progressed northward along the ridge just above the northwest side of the lake.

The trail transitioned from wooded single track to rail-trail after a short jaunt through Spring Valley. From there the rail trail traversed flat ground to Xenia with a walk through the middle of town past the beautiful Greene County Courthouse that was built in 1902 in the Richardsonian-Romanesque architecture style. We had gotten a tip by a local to definitely stop at Nick's Restaurant at the northern part of the Xenia section. Unfortunately for us, Nick's was closed for remodeling and we had to settle for Subway across the parking lot.

The trail continued along the rail-trail to the progressive town of Yellow Springs. Once there, we connected with a group of Dayton area hikers to complete the final 10 miles of our journey to Fairborn where our vehicle awaited us. Francisco, from the Dayton Hikers meet-up group, graciously allowed us to stow our packs in his car for the final leg of the hike. Our blistered feet and tired legs thanked him. The last ten miles started at the rail station in Yellow Springs and followed the blue blazes along the city sidewalks through town. Once we arrived at the YMCA in Fairborn, we caravanned back to Yellow Springs to Peach's Bar and Grill to meet up with some of the Dayton Hikers and share a celebratory beer (or few).

Overall, the Caesar’s Creek section of the BT was very well marked, included several differing terrains, and offered beautiful scenery throughout the 55 mile section. Once out of Caesar’s Creek State Park, locals offered us water and encouragement that helped us greatly along the way. Guaranteed, this trip will be unforgettable to us all.
**January 2016**

**January 9**
3rd Annual Dayton Hikers Buckeye Trail Winter Hike and Potluck, Caesar Creek State Park

*Description:* Enjoy the winter scenery with five hikes ranging from 3 to 12 miles in length along the Buckeye Trail. Hikes begin at different times but all end at the same time. Potluck dinner afterwards. Come dressed for winter hiking and bring a dish to share. You must sign up with Dayton Hikers, Friends of the Buckeye Trail, Miami River chapter, or another participating Meetup group so we have a headcount. For more information visit: http://www.meetup.com/DaytonHikers/events/226161860/

**January 18**
MLK Day Hike - Hueston Woods State Park
- **Contact:** Trail Management Team stc@buckeyetrail.org

**January 21**
BTA Membership Drive
- **Location:** Star City Brewing Company, 319 S 2nd St, Miamisburg in the historic Peerless Mill Inn. For more information and to buy tickets visit: http://www.buckeyetrail.org/memberdrive/day/

**January 23-24**
BT Circuit Hike Bowerston/Belle Valley Sections
- **Saturday:** Meet at driveway of first house north of Point 32 on Lodge Rd in Bowerston Section. Leave at 9:30AM to car pool to SR-800 at Marina Rd south of Point 25, Bowerston Section. The hike is about 10.9 miles. Sunday: Meet at gravel parking lot by bridge on R-55 in Salt Fork Wildlife Area about 2.1 miles past Point 4, Belle Valley Section. Leave at 9:00AM to car pool to driveway north of Point 32, Bowerston Section. The hike is about 7.3 miles.
- **Contact:** Jim Gilkey at 614-879-9912 ahead of time, or on hike weekend at 740-277-8749

**February 20-21**
BT Circuit Hike Defiance Section
- **Location:** New Straitsville Section
- **Saturday:** Meet at gravel parking pull off along SR-424 just west of the bridge for SR-281. Leave at 9:30AM to car pool to driveway at 15111 County Line Rd south of Point 2. The hike is about 10.8 miles.
- **Sunday:** Meet at gravel parking pull off on SR-424 at Point 10. Leave at 9:00AM to car pool to parking pull off west of bridge for SR-281. The hike is about 8.6 miles.
- **Contact:** Jim Gilkey at 614-879-9912 ahead of time, or on hike weekend at 740-277-8749

**February 12-13**
BT Circuit Hike Belle Valley Section
- **Saturday:** Meet at parking lot at Old National Rd and Fairgrounds Rd, Point 10. Leave at 9:30AM to car pool to parking lot by bridge on R-55 in the Salt Fork Wildlife Area between Points 4 and 5. The hike is about 11.1 miles.
- **Sunday:** Meet at the parking lot by the entrance to Marina Point Campgrounds, Point 15. Leave at 9:00AM to car pool to Point 10. The hike is about 10.8 miles.
- **Camping:** Marina Point Campground
- **Contact:** Jim Gilkey at 614-879-9912 ahead of time or on hike weekend at 740-277-8749

**BTA Barn Directions**
Take I-77 south to US-250 east (just south of New Philadelphia). Follow US-250 past Tappan Dam almost to the end of the lake. There is a causeway with a sign that reads “Tappan Lake Park”. Turn right (this road also takes you to Deersville). Approximately 3.1 miles from the US-250 turnoff is Beall Rd. on the right. Follow this dead-end road 1.3 mi. It ends at the BTA Barn down a long gravel driveway.

Remember the house side of the driveway is absolutely and strictly off-limits. It is a private residence so please respect their wishes and stay on our side of the driveway and please do not block any roads.

**MARCH**

**February 16-17**
Scioto Trail Section
- **Description:** Work south of the US 35 tunnel to restore the trail after clear cutting logging operations.
- **Camping:** TBD
- **Meals:** Bring your own food and water.
- **Contact:** Trail Management Team stc@buckeyetrail.org

**February 20-21**
Caesar Creek Section
- **Description:** Work to install water bars and landing steps. There are some badly eroded sections of the trail between the Visitor Center and SR-73 that could use some rehabilitation, to be determined by consulting with Caesar Creek State Park personnel.
- **Camping:** TBD
- **Meals:** Bring your own food and water.
- **Contact:** Trail Management Team stc@buckeyetrail.org

**March 10-11**
Scioto Trail Section
- **Description:** Trail building at the former Girl Scout camp, Crowell Hilaka.
- **Camping:** On the property.
- **Meals:** Bring your own food and water.
- **Contact:** Trail Management Team stc@buckeyetrail.org

**April 1-3**
Scioto Trail Section
- **Description:** Work south of the US 35 tunnel to restore the trail after clear cutting logging operations.
- **Camping:** TBD
- **Meals:** Bring your own food and water.
- **Contact:** Trail Management Team stc@buckeyetrail.org

**April 16-18**
Medina Section
- **Description:** Trail building at the former Girl Scout camp, Crowell Hilaka.
- **Camping:** On the property.
- **Meals:** Bring your own food and water.
- **Contact:** Trail Management Team stc@buckeyetrail.org

**April 19-21**
BTA Barn Directions
Take I-77 south to US-250 east (just south of New Philadelphia). Follow US-250 past Tappan Dam almost to the end of the lake. There is a causeway with a sign that reads “Tappan Lake Park”. Turn right (this road also takes you to Deersville). Approximately 3.1 miles from the US-250 turnoff is Beall Rd. on the right. Follow this dead-end road 1.3 mi. It ends at the BTA Barn down a long gravel driveway.

Remember the house side of the driveway is absolutely and strictly off-limits. It is a private residence so please respect their wishes and stay on our side of the driveway and please do not block any roads.

**April 23-24**
BT Circuit Hike Defiance Section
- **Saturday:** Meet at entrance to paving company about 1.1 miles east of US-6 on US-24. Leave at 9:00AM to car pool to a paving company driveway about 1.1 miles east of US-6 on US-24. The hike is about 10.1 miles.
- **Sunday:** Meet at Providence Metropark parking lot, Point 16. Leave at 9:00AM to car pool to a paving company driveway about 1.1 miles east of US-6 on US-24. The hike is about 10.1 miles.

**Chuckwagon Reservations**
For meal reservations for the chuckwagon at work parties (where available), contact Chuck Wagon Master, Jay Holwick at: holwick@columbus.rr.com

740-743-3813
Camping: Mary Jane Thurston State Park Campground  
Contact: Jim Gilkey at 614-879-9912 ahead of time or on hike weekend at 740-277-8749

April 30 - May 1
Old Mans Cave Section Pretty Run Preserve  
**Description:** Spring clean up of the trail and other work.  
Camping: On the property.  
Meals: Bring your own food and water.  
Contact: Trail Management Team stc@buckeyetrail.org

May 1
Camping: Mary Jane Thurston State Park Campground  
Contact: Jim Gilkey at 614-879-9912 ahead of time or on hike weekend at 740-277-8749

May 3-4
New Straitsville Section  
**Description:** Wildcat Hollow trail maintenance.  
Camping: Camping at the Group campground near boat dock 3.  
Meals: Bring your own food and water.  
Contact: Trail Management Team stc@buckeyetrail.org

May 21-25
West Union Section - Edge of Appalachia  
*BTA Chuck Wagon Event*  
**Description:** Continue building new trail from where we left off in 2015.  
Camping: Near the maintenance building on Waggoner Riffle Rd.  
Meals: This is a chuck wagon event. Meals will be provided free for the first 20 volunteers to sign up with Jay Holwick at holwick@columbus.rr.com by June 19, 2016.  
Contact: Trail Management Team stc@buckeyetrail.org

May 28-29
Shawnee Section - Ballinger Property  
**Description:** Build benches or beds in the shelter. Remove downed trees and blaze trail in Shawnee State Forest Wilderness Area  
Camping: TBD.  
Meals: Bring your own food and water.  
Contact: Trail Management Team stc@buckeyetrail.org

June 4-5
New Straitsville Section  
**Description:** Wildcat Hollow trail maintenance.  
Camping: Camping at the Group campground near boat dock 3.  
Meals: Bring your own food and water.  
Contact: Trail Management Team stc@buckeyetrail.org

June 25-28
Stockport Section - AEP  
*BTA Chuck Wagon Event*  
**Description:** AEP trail maintenance.  
Camping: AEP site TBD  
Meals: This is a chuck wagon event. Meals will be provided free for the first 20 volunteers to sign up with Jay Holwick at holwick@columbus.rr.com by June 19, 2016.  
Contact: Trail Management Team stc@buckeyetrail.org

July 9-10
Troy Section - Eastwood MetroPark near Dayton  
**Description:** Potential work includes clearing the view shed to the Mad River for approximately 1 mile along the bank. This will involve cutting honeysuckle and potentially treating the stumps, as well as possible tread improvements to the same area.  
Camping: Eastwood MetroPark  
Meals: Bring your own food and water.  
Contact: Trail Management Team stc@buckeyetrail.org

July 16-17
Defiance Section - Providence/Farnsworth MetroParks  
**Description:** Help cut back foliage along trail.  
Camping: Farnsworth MetroPark  
Meals: Bring your own food and water.  
Contact: Trail Management Team stc@buckeyetrail.org

July 23-27
Road Fork and Whipple Sections  
**Description:** Chainsaw and weed whack both off-road pieces.  
Camping: Little Muskingum Watershed Association property  
Meals: Bring your own food and water.  
Contact: Trail Management Team stc@buckeyetrail.org

September 17-21
Mogadore Section West Branch State Park  
**Description:** Continue building trail around the lake.  
Camping: At West Branch State Park at the back meadow of the horse camp area.  
Meals: Bring your own food and water.  
Contact: Trail Management Team stc@buckeyetrail.org

October 8-9
New Straitsville Section - Burr Oak State Park  
*BTA Chuck Wagon Event*  
**Description:** Trail maintenance weekend.  
Camping: At the Group campground near boat dock 3  
Meals: This is a chuck wagon event. Meals will be provided free for the first 20 volunteers to sign up with Jay Holwick at holwick@columbus.rr.com by October 3, 2016.  
Contact: Trail Management Team stc@buckeyetrail.org

October 15-19
Bowerston Section  
**Description:** This is a work party to move 0.4 miles trail off of SR22 and onto the dirt near Piedmont Lake. Also work to build 0.6 miles of trail along Clendenning Lake to make a loop with existing trail.  
Camping: At the BTA Barn on Tappan Lake.  
Meals: TBD  
Contact: Trail Management Team stc@buckeyetrail.org
After months of preparation, the First Annual “Run for the Blue Blazes” Marathon Trail Run was a great success thanks to the leadership of BTA Volunteers, especially Herb and Susie Hulls! Being a first, this trail run was in part a trial run, considering an original course layout, trail preparation, sponsorships, advertising, registration, partnerships, permissions, logistics, awards, timing and more. BTA volunteers turned out in force on a beautiful fall day that was eventually overtaken by rain. But I didn’t hear any complaints from trail runners who all successfully reached Burr Oak Lodge from the Village of Shawnee following the Blue Blazes of the BT for over 26 miles.

Trail runner Randy Ruch shared, “I had a lot of fun on the course, which was very difficult, and really enjoyed all the great volunteers. I could tell you and your crew worked your tails off getting the course ready and everything else ready and then doing all the things you did on race day. I hope you continue to hold the event despite the low turn-out. I think you have a potential “must-do” event.” Another trail runner agreed that BTA “Volunteers were awesome!! Course was well marked. Really appreciated the locally-made finish medals. I’ve run more than a dozen marathons and this was the best.”

This run is a great example of bringing together the trail work of the Buckeye Trail Crew, strengthening local partnerships, volunteer recruitment and retention, fundraising, membership development, promoting the BT locally and with a target audience of trail running groups, and above all – enjoying the BT and the camaraderie of like-minded BT enthusiasts.

Marathon Finishers: Jeffrey Gibson (1st Men’s), Andrea Boyle (1st Women’s), Jason Rupe, Randy Ruch, Nathan Boyle, Cecil Snow, Jamie Guy, Burt Dowden, Luis Perez-Caraballo, and Paul Huffman

Thank you “Run for Blue Blazes” Trail Runners, BTA Volunteers and our Sponsors:
Rocky Boots
Timco, Inc.
Classic Brands
Peoples Bank
Cabin at the Crossroads
Hocking Hills Tourism Association
Fullbrooks Cafe & Coffee
Straitsville Special Moonshine Distillery
Watershed Distillery
Hocking College Foundation
Elmer Yoest
Jeff & Sarah Yoest
There is just something about getting away from it all, cutting the tether to your cell phone and email, and just getting back to nature and spending some time outdoors on a trail, hunting, or simply running around the neighborhood park. It might seem like a little thing to some but it isn’t – access to the outdoors, access to trails, access to nature – is not only a quality of life issue, it is who we are as Buckeyes. Many of my favorite memories are outdoors playing football, picnicking time with my family, or just kicking a ball around with my friends.

It is this same tradition and heritage that we all want to pass along to our children. We all relish the idea of showing them Cuyahoga Falls, teaching them how to hike, and imparting to them a love for the outdoors.

Unfortunately, our ability to protect our public lands and outdoor heritage is at greater threat right now than at any other time in the last 50 years. It is in danger because Congress made a very short-sighted decision and allowed the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to expire on September 30th.

For those who aren’t familiar with the LWCF – and I am sure this is most – LWCF takes a small sliver of money from oil and gas royalties and invests it in our local communities, national parks, and historical sites. It is based on a simple notion – when we use non-renewable resources, we should invest part of the proceeds in renewable resources. It has the added benefit of investing hundreds of millions of dollars every year in our local communities.

How does the LWCF impact the Buckeye Trail? Besides being one of the few places to get money for local parks and trail maintenance, simply put, the Buckeye Trail isn’t complete. It isn’t whole and in many places, relies on private landowners to provide access to the trail. If the landowners have a change of heart or sell their property, they are within their rights to close down the trail on their property. This would be devastating and LWCF is the only source of money for buying in-holdings, completing trails, and providing funds for easements and rights-of-way to permanently secure access to our trails.

Without LWCF, there is no federal program to execute these absolutely vital functions and match state and local funding contributions. There is no federal program to buy in-holdings in our national parks. There is no federal program to protect vital historical sites.

Congress simply failed to act on this critical program and it is unacceptable. Despite easily having enough votes to reauthorize the program, the LWCF couldn’t even get a vote. Our country has many issues, big and small, that should be and need to be debated. That shouldn’t stop our government from executing basic governance.

We simply can’t sit on our hands and let the LWCF become another victim of government gridlock. Ohio is a powerful and influential state and it is time to tell our representatives to reauthorize the LWCF. Call Senator Brown. Call Senator Portman. Call your Congressman. Heck, go shout it from the rooftop. Spread the word however you can that LWCF MUST be reauthorized.
At the Buckeye Trail Board meeting in June, a committee was formed to find the perfect boulder on which to mount the bronze plaque commemorating the completion of the Buckeye Trail from the Ohio River in Cincinnati to Lake Erie at Mentor Headlands. The plaque, dated October 10, 1970, had rested in Velda Vogt's basement for 44 years before being donated to the Buckeye Trail Association in 2014.

I had some ideas of what I thought the memorial should look like, so I did several mockups of a boulder using large pieces of cardboard with the plaque and text to be sandblasted into the boulder stating it is located at the northern terminus of the trail. I sent photos of several mockups to the committee members and our graphic designer, Darlene Karoly, for feedback as the design continued to evolve.

I visited three monument companies in northeast Ohio to get estimates for mounting the plaque and sandblasting the desired text into a boulder and eventually decided on Johns Carabelli Memorials of South Euclid. Working with Johns Carabelli vice president, Monica Johns, graphic designer Michelle Shaw, and the rest of the staff was a pleasure.

Next it was a trip to two sand and gravel companies in Mantua to check out boulders. After looking at several hundred boulders and still not being able to decide, I asked committee member and Bedford Section supervisor Bob Morecki to accompany me for another look. We finally decided on a big granite boulder with relatively flat surfaces, front and back. Bob and I notified Oscar Brugmann Sand and Gravel Vice President, Todd Brugmann, of our boulder choice and Bob explained the purpose of the boulder and where it was going to be placed. After Bob’s narrative, Todd donated the boulder to the Buckeye Trail Association. I subsequently made arrangements to rent a trailer and return to pick up the boulder and deliver it to John Carabelli Monuments.

Wanting the plaque to be securely mounted into the face of the boulder, I visited Pioneer Machine in Lodi and explained what the plaque represented and where it was to be placed and asked if they could drill and tap the back of the plaque in the corners so threaded rod could be epoxied into the holes. The plaque’s threaded rods would then be epoxied into holes drilled into the boulder making it very difficult for the plaque to be removed. Pioneer Machine Vice President, Sherry Gray, said they could do the work and that there would be no charge.
On September 23rd, I rented another trailer and drove to Johns Carabelli to pick up the finished monument boulder and deliver it to Ohio State Parks Natural Areas and Preserves District Manager, Adam Wohlever, for installation at Headlands Dunes State Nature Preserve.

At the Northern Terminus of the Buckeye Trail, where the Bedford and the Burton sections meet, Adam and his crew, with assistance from Bob Morecki, worked to set the memorial boulder in place. The boulder was placed on a sand base with concrete poured around it, then more sand covering the concrete.

Ohio State Parks Natural Areas and Preserves District Manager, Adam Wohlever on left, Charles Fletcher in middle and Ben Piazza on right at completion of boulder installation.

On September 26th the unveiling of the memorial boulder and plaque was attended by Velda Vogt, wife of the late Donald Vogt, who was the BTA Board Secretary in the 1970s. Velda was happy the memorial plaque had finally found a permanent home. The event was also attended by BTA President Connie Pond, Executive Director Andrew Bashaw, and many other BTA members and guests.
This was meant to be about reaching halfway but I hiked more miles than I anticipated this year. I wanted to reflect back on what it's been like so far. I was talking with Connie Pond about how it feels to be close to finishing. She took the words out of my mouth as she quietly said, "It's kind of sad," as if not wanting to admit it.

My journey began when I came across a book Cleveland on Foot – 50 Walks & Hikes in Greater Cleveland. I started exploring some of the hikes in the book. One was in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. It connected Brandywine Falls, Blue Hen Falls, and Buttermilk Falls. A good portion of the hike followed the blue blazes of the Buckeye Trail. I was curious—what was this Buckeye Trail all about? I bought Follow the Blue Blazes. I found the BTA website. I came across the statement that many people complete the trail over several years. I thought, "I can do that." I set out hiking the trails closest to home. I was hiking out and back, sometimes finding a loop trail or roads to return to my car. I didn't really know what it was going to take to finish. I didn't have a plan for what would happen when I had to drive 4-5 hours to get to the trail. Hike four hours and return home? I literally embraced the quote, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." I decided I'd figure it out when I got there.

A friend of mine began hiking with me after finding out what I was doing. This was great because it allowed us to hike from car to car. He hiked just over a hundred miles with me before losing interest. I then teamed up with Steve Hughes, who I met through Trail Talk, the online message board. We decided that once we got further out we would start doing weekend hikes and camp somewhere on Saturdays. He arranged an overnight stay at the barn. He mentioned that members were allowed to camp there. I admitted I wasn't a member. He asked me, "Why not?" I told him because it cost $20 and hiking the trail was free. He explained about the discounts on maps. I told him I only bought three section maps a year and it wasn't worth it. I remember him saying, "People work hard so you can hike the trail, Randall. Stop being a cheapskate and pay your twenty bucks!" I firmly believed that nature should be free but I wasn't considering the cost of the preservation and maintenance. I didn't think about the acquisitions, the tools, or even the cost of the paint, or anything like that.

It wasn't until Trail Fest 2013 that I began to understand. It was then that I saw Andrew pulling levers as he exclaimed, "Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain. He doesn't make the Buckeye Trail what it is, you do!" I met Pat Hayes, Scott Kamph, Captain Blue, Richard Lutz, and many others including my successful EGGS partner Kat LoGrande.

Steve Hughes was often not available when I was ready to hike so I jumped down to the Road Fork and Whipple sections, covering those with out-and-back hikes or loops. After a year of that, I realized I needed to find some more hiking partners if I was going to hit my ten-year goal. I started posting on The Friends of the Buckeye Trail Meet-up site. At first, no one joined. Those first hikes were early in the year and it was still cold and snowy. But then "the New Yorkers," Dan and Ruth Dorough, joined me on a section in Belle Valley. They were section hiking the North Country National Scenic Trail and had been doing it over several years and were about to get back into it more seriously. How cool was that? BT and NCT hikers hiking the same path – two different trails. Cheryl Winningham came along as well. I’ve since hiked 211 miles with her on the trail – I truly enjoy her company on the trail.

Then came Trail Fest 2014 and 2015. I met more people. I volunteered to patch up as many holes in the barn as we could to keep the bats out. I helped build the shelter in the Stockport section. I was persuaded to post my hikes on chapter meet-up sites and I got to know some more hikers like Mark and Marci Schubert. I started joining Jim Gilkey on his hikes and had the pleasure of hiking with some two timers like Richard and C.W. (that’s what I call the people on their second lap). I’ve volunteered for the Market to Market Relay where I met Nan whom I corresponded with to help some hikers tackle the Caesar Creek Section.

What was the point of writing this again? Oh yeah, to reflect back on hiking 1,000 miles of the BT. When I look back on it, as cliché as it sounds, it turns out, it was not the miles, but the smiles that mattered most. I wasn’t trying to acknowledge all the people who have made my journey successful and more interesting; there are too many to name, but let me end by saying “Thank You!” to the many people who have given me inspiration, the people who have given me advice or encouragement, the people I’ve hiked with, the new friends I’ve made, and most of all to all the trail maintainers.

I’ll be finishing in 2017 at Findley State Park and you’re all invited.
A Series of Remarkable Experiences and Other Hiking Life Lessons

Barb Crompton (Blue Blaze Bugsie)

The last time I was at Smith and Riverview Roads, the world was ablaze in a beautiful array of autumn colors. It is quite the different scenery in the snow-white winter wonderland of this hike. I had remembered some large parking lots across from the culvert so I drove straight to them, but now snow-bound, they were no longer attractive parking spaces. Studying the map I saw the F.A. Sieberling Nature Realm, a small park about a mile up Smith Road, and even though I would have a bit of a walk to get back to the trail, I went for it. As the hiking gods would have it, I had arranged for a pick up in a few hours; knowing this was going to be a one-way trip, it took a little bit of the edge off walking the extra distance. Exiting the park on foot, I headed down the hill to just before the railroad tracks where I took a right to get onto the trail that would take me into Sand Run Metro Park. Almost immediately I plunged into a deep snow pile of a trail. I was so jarred by the drop and the depth of the snow that after only a few nudges I just stopped moving at all. Gathering my senses I looked around, assessing if I'd made a mistake or if this was actually the trail, and then started questioning how long it would be this way. Flashbacks of all the terrain I had here-to-now covered with no snow, a distinct urge pushed me to abandon the hike altogether until, maybe, say spring, but I finally convinced myself I could do anything for a few hours.

Still feeling a little sorry for myself, I slowly began to trudge on through the nearly waist-high snow. Almost immediately I heard the low rumblings of a vehicle. I was so excited as I entered the nearly-cleared parking lot and I could feel my face start to brighten up with a smile as I began to stamp my feet and brush the snow from my legs. I was so busy expressing how very pleased I was with myself for having not given up so quickly that I didn't realize the Bobcat clearing snow was backing up toward me! It took a few seconds of dodging and signaling to the operator until he finally noticed and stopped chasing me around the lot in reverse, but that did not dampen my spirits. I had this hike!

We had just had a big snowfall – that fluffy heavy stuff that clings to everything – so the scenery, though dreary from an overcast day, elicited a nod of appreciation from the camera. I happily snapped away at snow-covered bridges draped over gently babbling waters, snow-crowned trail markers pointing the way, and of snow-flooded ravines as I passed through them. The world around me was outlined in snow figures and the only noises to be heard were the soft snow-dampened muffled crunches underfoot. The trail continued to descend into "bottom land," which took me back by the river and eventually the tow path trail. More snow-covered bridges and interesting outlines awaited me as I passed mile marker 34. Honking geese greeted me at the confluence of the Cuyahoga and Little Cuyahoga Rivers, at which point I continued along the little one, staying with the TPT. I finished up for the day at Cascade Park, where a warm ride was waiting, thanks to Scoutmaster Carlson. I’ll see you soon, Cascade Park, for my next BT adventure.
Miami Conservancy District and the Buckeye Trail

Janet Bly and Kurt Rinehart,
Public Relations Manager, Miami Conservancy District (MCD)

It is hard to find a silver lining in a catastrophe. But if it weren’t for an epic flood in 1913, the Buckeye Trail in southwest Ohio might look much different. The worst natural disaster in Ohio history led to the Miami Conservancy District’s (MCD) building a system of dams and levees and securing thousands of acres of river corridor and floodplain lands to protect southwest Ohio communities from flooding. Today, many hikers enjoy that same land as part of the Buckeye Trail.

Hiking the Buckeye Trail in the Dayton area (Troy and St. Mary’s sections) will be on the paved Mad River and Great Miami River recreation trails – portions of which are owned by MCD or are located on MCD lands—and on natural trail surfaces, often on MCD lands. Hikers who walk from Fairborn to Dayton, through Huber Heights, Tipp City, Troy and Piqua to Lockington will see many attractions, including the National Museum of the US Air Force, the world’s largest aviation museum, and Triangle Park, the site of the very first NFL game. They will also find evidence of MCD’s work to safeguard cities from flooding. Some of these sites hold interesting stories:

Huffman Dam - Huffman Dam is one of five MCD earthen dams built to temporarily store floodwaters to protect downstream cities from flooding. The Village of Osborn once stood about 4 miles northeast of where Huffman Dam is now. Not only would the dam have placed the village in peril of flooding, construction of the dam required relocating the railroad lines along the Mad River that went through Osborn. Following the dam’s construction, the village annexed land to the east, adjacent to the Village of Fairfield where the new railroad lines were built. A locally organized relocation company physically moved the houses and buildings from their original sites to lots in the new Village of Osborn. Osborn and Fairfield coexisted as neighbors for about 25 years until they merged, forming the current City of Fairborn.

Taylorsville Dam - U.S Route 40 runs across the top of Taylorsville Dam, another of MCD’s flood protection dams. The National Road, built in the 1800s, was the primary east-west thoroughfare from Pennsylvania to Missouri. The National Road crossed the Great Miami River valley at the Village of Tadmor, 1.25 miles north of Taylorsville Dam. Tadmor was demolished by the 1913 flood and never rebuilt. When MCD built the dam, the federal government moved the National Road, today know as U.S. 40, across the top of the dam to protect the roadway from flooding.

Lockington Dam - Lockington Dam is a third MCD dam along the Buckeye Trail. The Lockington Dam gets its name from the adjacent Village of Lockington, an important stop on the Miami and Erie Canal. The village sits at the south end of the Loramie

Summit, the highest point along the canal. Seven canal locks lowered the canal from the Loramie Summit to the Great Miami River valley. The Buckeye Trail follows the Miami & Erie Canal just east of the dam.

Earthen Levees – The grassy banks that line the rivers in many of the towns and cities are MCD levees that work in conjunction with the upstream dams to prevent flooding. The Buckeye Trail is sometimes along the top of these levees – like in Troy, where the levee is often called the Strawberry Levee because it hosts Troy’s Strawberry Festival. When various flood prevention solutions were originally considered for this region, a “levees only” plan was an option. Prior to MCD, “levee only” flood protection was the norm throughout the country. MCD’s levees, however, are part of a system of dams, levees, modified channels and floodplains. They typically range from barely noticeable to about 10 feet tall. The “levees only” option would have built levees 25 feet tall or higher.

Deeds Point – Where the Mad River flows into the Great Miami River, a beautiful pedestrian bridge takes hikers across the Mad River to Deeds Point MetroPark, overlooking downtown Dayton. Prior to the 1913 flood, the land that is now Deeds Point was low lying floodplain. The earth was built up into a point as the river channels were improved and levees were built by MCD in the 1920s. It is named for Colonel Edward A. Deeds, a Dayton industrialist who led the Dayton Flood Prevention Committee after the 1913 flood. He served on the MCD Board of Directors from 1915 to 1954.
The Blue Blaze Society

Linda Paul

A passion for the Buckeye Trail is what Buckeye Trail Association members have in common. Whether you are the President of the Board, a Board member (past or current), the Executive Director, a staff member or one of our numerous volunteers, you know that all of these people come together to build, maintain and support the Buckeye Trail.

The idea for the Buckeye Trail was “born” in 1958 with an article in the Columbus Dispatch. The first 20 miles of the Trail were dedicated in September 1959. It then took over 20 years to complete the original 500-mile Trail.

What a remarkable accomplishment! Using only volunteers, a 1,400 mile trail was built in Ohio. Kudos to all of those that came before us. And of course, the Trail is never really done. Any Trail Adopter will tell you - work is always going on to build and maintain the Trail.

Now it is our turn to advance the dream - to leave a legacy through the Blue Blaze Society. This is the reason for the formation of the Blue Blaze Society, the Buckeye Trail Association legacy group, to ensure that the Buckeye Trail and the Buckeye Trail Association continues for the next 50 years and beyond.

The goals of the Blue Blaze Society are:

• To help secure the future of the Buckeye Trail
• To increase the Buckeye Trail Association’s Greatest Needs Fund
• To increase the Buckeye Trail Association’s Trail Preservation Fund

Members of the Blue Blaze Society will be Buckeye Trail Association members who

• Annually make a contribution of $500 or more, or
• Have informed the Buckeye Trail Association that they have named BTA as a recipient of a planned gift, or
• Have made a one-time contribution of $5,000 or more (this can include a corporate match), or
• Have made a permanent donation of an easement of property of $5,000 or more.

The Blue Blaze Society committee will be contacting Buckeye Trail Association members who already meet one or more of these criteria by December 2015. The induction of the first members of the Blue Blaze Society will take place at the May 2016 TrailFest.

If you would like to be a member of the first Blue Blaze Society, contact Linda Paul at 614-354-6367 or treasurer@buckeyetrail.org.

Get Hiking, Get Dirty, Get Connected, Get Involved and become a member of the 2016 Blue Blaze Society!

Thank you, The Blue Blaze Society Committee
Dayton-Area BTA Membership Drive

Andy Niekamp

Live, Breathe and Hike the Buckeye Trail!

January 21, 2016
Dayton, Ohio
Time: 6:30pm
Cost: $20.00/person

Location: Star City Brewing Company, 319 S 2nd St, Miamisburg in the historic Peerless Mill Inn

You are invited to attend the Buckeye Trail Membership Drive in Dayton on January 21, 2016. Show your support for the Buckeye Trail Association by becoming a member and attending an evening with fellow Buckeye Trail enthusiasts. Join us at a unique microbrewery for an evening of fun, food, drink and raffle prizes. Learn more about the Buckeye Trail through a series of short, inspiring presentations.

Anyone buying a ticket automatically becomes a member of the Buckeye Trail Association. Are you already a member of the BTA? Then give a gift membership to a friend or family member. Sorry, tickets cannot be used for membership renewals. Current members are encouraged to attend! Show your support, hang out, socialize, and have fun with new members, familiar faces, and the future of the BTA!

Your ticket includes a one-year, individual membership in the Buckeye Trail Association, one mug of Blue Blaze Ale (alcoholic) or one mug of Grandma Gatewood Cream Ale (non-alcoholic), pizza and a raffle ticket to win fabulous prizes!

For more information and to buy tickets visit: http://www.buckeyetrail.org/memberdrive/day/

Brought to you by the Buckeye Trail Association and Community Partners.
Buckeye Trail Scholarships

Ruth Brown

Students who are BTA members or whose parents or grandparents are BTA members are eligible to apply for a BTA scholarship for college. Two $500.00 scholarships are available each year. Details can be found on the Buckeye Trail website under the scholarship section at www.buckeyetrail.org/scholarship.php. The application must be received by April 1. The scholarships are awarded in May during Buckeye TrailFest.

The two scholarship recipients in 2015 were Michelle Benedum, who is completing a degree in Wildlife Management at the University of Idaho, and Sierra Bachman, who is working on a degree in environmental education at Liberty University.

2016 TrailFest Photo Contest

The 2014 TrailFest photo contest was such a success that we would like to do it again. Please stay tuned for further details and save or take those BT pictures especially those with the Blue Blazes.

Where to Stay for TrailFest

Bed and breakfast housing in the area:
The Cobbler Shop, Zoar, 330-874-2600
The Keeping Room B&B, Zoar, 330-874-3181
Zoar School Inn B&B, Zoar, 216-927-3700
Garver House, Strasburg, 330-878-4113
Brandywine B&B, Dover, 330-364-5023
Old House Inn, New Philadelphia, 330-268-4033
Wild Horse B&B, Strasburg/Bolivar Rd, 330-874-0294

Hotels in area:
Ramada Limited, Strasburg, 800-272-6232
Hampton Inn - (330) 339-7000
The Schoenbrunn Inn - (330) 339-4334
New Philadelphia Inn - (330) 339-0123
Best Western Dutch Valley - (330) 339-6500
Holiday Inn Express - (330) 339-7731
Knights Inn - (330) 339-4116

Block of rooms reserved at the Sleep Inn in Bolivar, 330-874-3435, and at the Ramada Limited, Strasburg, 800-272-6232
Welcome New Members!
Bev and Jerry Starcher

Zeb Acuff and Family, Hamilton
F Marvin Bahr, Kirtland
Laurie Benic and Family, Lyndhurst
R Sean Brooks and Family, Trimble
Camille Brubaker, Pickerington
Adam Burchett, Hillsboro
Barbara Burns, West Jefferson
Eric Butler, Bay Village
John Cipolla, Brecksville
Todd Clark, Massillon
Teresa Cooper, Oak Hill
Mike DeBlasis, Blacklick
Hugh Endsley, Malta
Larry England, Powell
Derek Fitzger and Family, Columbus

Tammy Gallatin, Lodi
Jeffery Gibson, Sunbury
Dean Heberlein, Marblehead
Elaine Kolp and Family, Mayfield Village
Michael Kraft, Lakewood
Yoshihiko Kubota, Dublin
Lisa Kucharski, Cleveland
Julie Lakas, Parma
Travis Lansing, Xenia
Sarah Laughter, Vandalia
Richard and Becky Martin, Logan
Daryl Morrison, Girard
Penny Pennell, Plymouth
Luis Perez-Caraballo, Columbus
Anita Proxmire, Ottoville

Pamela Ramsey, North Canton
Carli Roby, Lima
Randy Ruch, Toledo
Jason Rupe, Zanesville
Susan Russell, Medina
Barb Scholtz, Cincinnati
Karam Sheban, Athens
Seth Sigler, Athens
Pieter Sluis and Family, Dublin
Cecil Snow, Glouster
Cynthia Somers and Family, Pataskala
Edward Stewart, Elyria
Kim and Rob Walker, Rocky River
Andrew Zachman, Columbus

BTA Funds Report

Your contribution to any BTA fund is tax deductible. All contributions of $20 or more are acknowledged. We hope to include your name in the list of contributors in the Trailblazer.

8/02/2015 - 11/1/2015

BARN FUND
Jim Gilkey

TRAIL PRESERVATION FUND
Ellen Botnick
Bill Schultz & Leslie Floyd

GENERAL FUND & SPECIAL EVENTS

Cabin at the Crossroads
Central Ohio Hikers and Backpackers
Columbus Foundation
Garry & Sydney Dill
Jo Frasure
Cleveland Hiking Club, in honor of
Emily Gregor
Mary Hamilton
Scott & Mary Anne Kamph

Kroger Community Rewards
Terry & Nancy McCann
Bill & Andrea McGovern
Off the Clock Events
Clara Jean Paryzek
Peoples Bank
Bob & Connie Pond
Rocky Boots

Martin Sabol
Cliff Thornley
Timco, Inc.
Lee David Tucker
Lynda Warner
Watershed Distillery
Jeff & Sarah Yoest
Elmer Yoest
MEMBERSHIP FORM (for new members only)

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City _____________________________ State _______Zip ________
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If gift membership, name of donor ____________________________

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Buckeye Trail Association
P.O. BOX 254, WORTHINGTON, OHIO 43085

OR JOIN ONLINE AT:
www.buckeyetrail.org/membership.html

2015-04-NEWSLETTER
Trail Fest 2016 will be held May 12th through 15th, 2016 in Zoar, Ohio.