



BUCKEYE TRAIL ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Testimony of Jill Moorhead

Trustee, Buckeye Trail Association

In Support of H.C.R. 13 – Urging Congress to Designate the Buckeye Trail as a National Scenic Trail Before the Ohio Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

Monday, October 6, 2025

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Koehler, and Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit my written testimony on behalf of the Buckeye Trail Association.

My name is Jill Moorhead, and I serve as a Trustee of the Buckeye Trail Association. In my professional life, I work in marketing and communications, serving clients across Ohio, and I am also a freelance writer for several publications. I first discovered the Buckeye Trail Association while writing an article about the Trail Town program for *Columbus Monthly* magazine. Until then, I had never heard of the Buckeye Trail—and I was stunned to learn that Ohio had its own version of the Appalachian Trail, running right through our communities. That moment lit a spark for me, and I have since made it my mission to ensure that more Ohioans know about the Buckeye Trail and what an extraordinary asset it is to our state.

From my work in marketing and journalism, I know that designations matter. They elevate communities, attract attention, and draw investment. National Scenic Trail designation would strengthen outdoor recreation in Ohio and grow tourism, while also shining a light on Ohio's small towns and rural places that too often remain overlooked in the public eye. The Buckeye Trail links together historic sites, national parks, Indigenous heritage, and 22 Trail Towns, where hikers spend their dollars in local coffee shops, breweries, and family-run restaurants.

The trail also offers healthy, free, and accessible opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to connect with nature. During the pandemic, it became a safe space for Ohioans to walk, explore, and heal. Today, it remains a lifeline for families, veterans, students, and everyday people who find respite on its 1,400+ miles. And it is powered by

volunteers, ordinary Ohioans who give back thousands of hours each year to maintain and protect it.

By supporting H.C.R. 13, you are helping to bring long overdue recognition to this work. National Scenic Trail designation would be a cost-effective investment in Ohio's communities and in the National Trails System as a whole. It would elevate one of our state's greatest treasures, strengthen our outdoor recreation economy, and inspire more people to discover Ohio, by walking through it, day hike by day hike. And now, we have the opportunity to place the Buckeye Trail on the same national stage as the Appalachian Trail. Perhaps one day, another journalist will discover it as I did—and write, *"It's like the Buckeye Trail."*

On behalf of the Buckeye Trail Association and the thousands of people who hike, volunteer, and find joy along the trail, I respectfully urge your support for H.C.R. 13. Thank you for your leadership and for considering this important resolution.

Respectfully,
Jill Moorhead
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