

# \$2 Polk County News

Established 1883

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Number 23

## Benton MacKaye Scenic Trail Act introduced



One of the many views from the trail

### Connecting Tennessee, Georgia and North Carolina for over 287 miles

Congressman Steve Cohen (TN-9) recently introduced the bipartisan Benton MacKaye Scenic Trail Act, which would designate a 287-mile trail linking Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina as a National Scenic Trail. The trail which crosses mountains and valleys and passes alongside streams and waterfalls is on federal land for 95 percent of its length and would be

administered by the U.S. Forest Service.

Congressman Cohen made the following statement:

"The Benton MacKaye Trail provides serious hikers and leisurely day-trippers a natural wonderland of bucolic hills, valleys, trees, wildlife and natural beauty. I'm proud to be joined by Representatives Chuck Fleischmann and

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### Benton MacKaye Scenic Trail Act,

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Chuck Edwards, whose districts are traversed by the trail, and by Representatives Scott DesJarlais, Lucy McBath and David Scott, in enhancing our nation's portfolio of scenic trails."

Congressman Chuck Fleischmann made the following statement:

"I am pleased to work with Congressman Cohen again to reintroduce the Benton MacKaye National Scenic Trail Act. The Benton MacKaye Trail is an invaluable part of my district that thousands of Tennesseans hike and connects some of the most beautiful parts of Tennessee with Georgia and North Carolina. The trail deserves to be given a National Scenic Trail designation, and I hope Congress acts quickly to pass this bill and send it to the president for his signature."

Ken Cissna, President of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association, made the fol-

lowing statement:

"The Benton MacKaye Trail provides an exceptional opportunity for tens of thousands of people to get outdoors every year and experience the stunning beauty of the Southern Appalachian Mountains. Designating this trail as our country's 12th National Scenic Trail will help protect our outdoor heritage for future generations, support local economies, and provide needed recreation opportunities for long-distance hikers and families. It would accomplish all this with no added cost to taxpayers. We are grateful to Congressmen Cohen and Fleischmann

for their work to protect this trail which is special to so many people."

The measure would designate the Benton MacKaye Trail as a National Scenic Trail intended to showcase the nation's spectacular natural resources and beauty, and provide recreational opportunities. The National Scenic Trail (NST) designation was authorized by Congress in 1968. Only eleven trails to date have received the prestigious NST status – the Appalachian Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail were the first. It has been more than 12 years since Congress approved the last NST.