



And the Name for the Trail Is...



Myron Avery



Arnold Guyot



Benton MacKaye

*Myron Avery's & Benton MacKaye's photos
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When Founding Father of the Benton MacKaye Trail, Dave Sherman, thought about names for a second long-distance trail he longed to make a reality, three men came to mind -- all of whom made significant contributions to the trail we know today as the Appalachian Trail (AT): Myron Avery, Arnold Guyot and Benton MacKaye.

Arnold Guyot

During the antebellum period (mid 1800s), Arnold Guyot was one of the greatest explorers of the Appalachians. From Mount Katahdin in Maine to Mount Oglethorpe in Georgia, he mapped what would become the Appalachian Trail. To get the most accurate barometric readings to determine the elevation of each mountain, the orographer spent years hiking through the dense forests of Appalachia and camping on the summits of its highest peaks. His was the first systematic attempt to name mountains.

Myron Avery

While Benton MacKaye dreamed of a long-distance trail extending from Georgia to Maine, it was Myron Avery who turned that dream into a reality. Avery himself was front and center, not only for planning and organizing, but also for constructing the trail which was completed in 1937.

The popular project had faced huge obstacles, including the Great Depression. World War II presented a different challenge. Years of neglect due to the wartime effort had taken a toll and the once pristine trail was overgrown and littered with blowdowns. But Avery's never-ending drive and single-minded focus overcame every challenge. However, he couldn't have done it without the strategic alliances he

built with local trail clubs and volunteer workers to construct and later to refurbish and maintain the trail.

Benton MacKaye

Benton MacKaye first proposed his dream for a long-distance trail stretching from Georgia to Maine in his 1921 thesis, 'An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning'. Included in the visionary forester's proposal was a map depicting a southern spur route that later became the inspiration for the trail known today as the Benton MacKaye Trail.

"It was such a natural fit to name the trail for the man who designed it," said Sherman. "His map showed the trail coming down the spine of the Smokies and extending into the Cohuttas. But once it got through the Smokies and across the Little Tennessee River -- then followed the height of land down the spine of the Blue Ridge range, where should it go south of the Cohuttas? Once the BMT got to Georgia and the Cohuttas, where would it end or begin? The Cohuttas being more a range of elevations and not just a single, fixed summit, it seemed appropriate simply to route it over to Springer Mountain," Sherman concluded.



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