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Bipartisan U.S. House, Senate bills seek feasibility study of National Scenic Trail designation for Benton MacKaye Trail

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Whigg Meadow on the Benton MacKaye Trail is pictured in 2016. In 2024, a pair of bipartisan bills seeking to designate the almost-300-mile-long Benton MacKaye

Trail in the Southern Appalachian Mountains of Tennessee, Georgia and North Carolina a national scenic trail have been introduced in the U.S. House and Senate.

TFP photo

A pair of bipartisan bills seeking to designate the almost-300-mile-long [Benton MacKaye Trail](#) in the Southern Appalachian Mountains of Tennessee, Georgia and North Carolina a National Scenic Trail have been introduced for the first time in both the U.S. House and Senate.

Members of the association by the same name are celebrating the effort to get a green light for a feasibility study en route to the designation that finally is getting bipartisan attention from lawmakers in both houses of Congress. Bills introduced twice in recent years in the U.S. House sought the National Scenic Trail designation, but no Senate members picked it up, according to Clare Sullivan, vice president of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association.

"We were delighted to get a companion bill in the Senate," Sullivan, also a member of the National Scenic Trail Committee, said in a phone interview.

The U.S. Senate version introduced by Sen. Raphael Warnock, D-Ga., and Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., authorizes a feasibility study of the National Scenic Trail designation, according to a statement from the trail association. A companion bill was introduced in the U.S. House by Reps. Steve Cohen, D-Memphis, Chuck Fleischmann, R- Southeast Tennessee, Scott DesJarlais, R-Sherwood, Chuck Edwards, R-N.C., Lucy McBath, D-Ga., and Nikema Williams, D-Ga.

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