

Big step forward for Benton MacKaye Trail

The Benton MacKaye Trail Association is celebrating the successful passage of the H.R. 2768 Benton MacKaye National Scenic Trail Feasibility Study Act of 2025, as amended, by the full House of Representatives. The bipartisan bill requires the feasibility study to be completed within two years.

This is big step forward towards permanent protection for the 288-mile Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT). The House bill is sponsored by Representatives Chuck Fleischmann (TN), Steve Cohen (TN), Chuck Edwards (NC), and Lucy McBath (GA). The Senate now will need to approve the amended version of the bill.

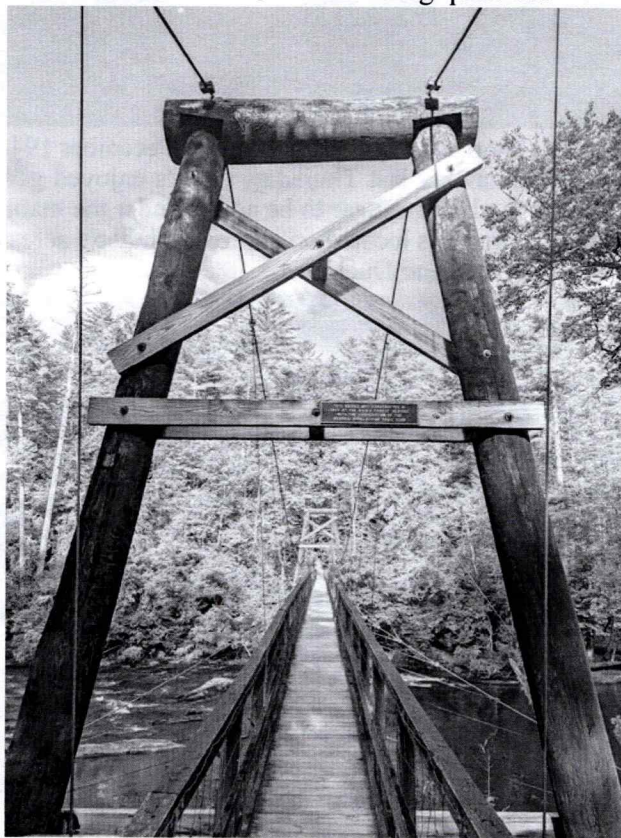
“We are grateful for the leadership from Representatives Fleischmann, Cohen, Edwards, and McBath for advancing this legislation to protect the Benton MacKaye Trail and set it on the path to becoming our country’s 12th National Scenic Trail (NST). We also extend our thanks to the members of the House of Representatives for passing this legislation. We urge the Senate to act swiftly to bring it to the floor for consideration,” said Bob Cowdrick, President of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association.

The last time a National Scenic Trail designation was approved by Congress was 15 years ago in 2009.

This is great news for the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT). Ninety-five percent of the 288-mile-long Benton MacKaye Trail already is on public land. One hundred seventy-three miles of the trail already enjoy the enhanced protection provided by the 1964 Wilderness Act for Wilderness Areas. The designation of the BMT as an NST will ensure the entire trail is protected for future gen-

erations and will remain a premier recreation destination for hikers. More than 100,000 visitors hike the trail annually and an NST designation will mean the already positive economic impact on Blue Ridge and other nearby communities will increase substantially.

To learn more about BM-TA’s quest for National Scenic Trail designation for the BMT, visit <https://bmta.org/quest-nst/>



Bridge on the trail constructed in 1977 by the Forest Service and the Ga. Appalachian Trail Club