



# Great Eastern Trail Newsletter

Volume 1, Number 2, March 2011

By Timothy A. Hupp

**Please feel free to print out or copy and distribute this newsletter**

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## More 2010 on the Great Eastern Trail

This past year many events have taken place as the building and consolidation of the Great Eastern Trail has continued. Here are some events that I missed in the last issue.

In addition to blazing the Crystal Hills Trail from the north end, FLTC oversaw Eagle Scout project: 1. A kiosk for a trail map of Pinnacle State Park, McCarthy State Forest, and the town of Addison. Also a gate was constructed through an 8' high deer fence. Ruth & Dan Durroughs became the first hikers to hike the length of the Crystal Hills Trail.

The Standing Stone Trail between Meadow Gap and Cowans Gap State Park (Pennsylvania) has been relocated onto private land. (The new trail is closed from November 1 to January 15—the old trail remains open.)



A winter GET hike on Meadow Creek Mountain, north of Lake Sherwood.



Devils Racecourse on Cumberland Mtn.  
(from CTC website)

*Can you think of a better name than "GET Newsletter"? Surely, with a trail known as "GET", we can come up with a pun-ny newsletter name better at getting attention. Email your suggestions to [Hupp\\_Tim@msn.com](mailto:Hupp_Tim@msn.com), or mail to 3723 Brown Mountain Lane, Elkton, VA 22827.*

## Alabama Trail proposal article

On January 31, 2011, the (Mobile) Alabama Press-Register had an article by Dave Helms about the planned Alabama Trail ([http://blog.al.com/spotnews/2011/02/conservation\\_fund\\_buys\\_762\\_acr.html](http://blog.al.com/spotnews/2011/02/conservation_fund_buys_762_acr.html)), which has been started by the Alabama Hiking Trail Society, which is a member club of the GETA. The initial part of the trail is at the southwest corner of Alabama, which is not in the GET corridor. But the southern-middle part may be possible for the GET to follow in the future.

The Alabama Trail, as envisioned, will run from Fort Morgan, at the tip of a peninsula in Mobile Bay, north to Florence, not far from the Tennessee border, then east to Huntsville and to the Walls of Jericho, located in a popular Jackson County wilderness area owned by the state's Forever Wild land preservation trust. Opened in 2004, it features a canyon bordered by 250-foot-high sheer cliffs surrounded by a hardwood forest filled with rare animal and plant species. The trail would be 550 miles long, and it is intended to be a wilderness walking trail.

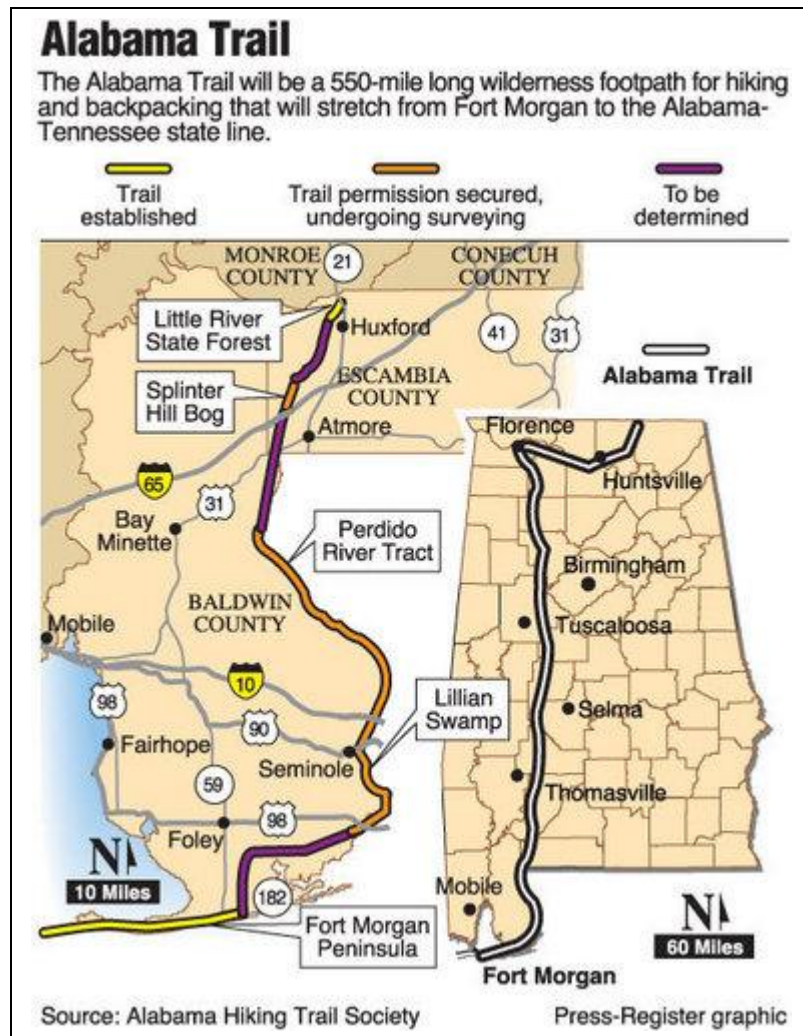
While much of the trail is still "dots on the map," its southernmost leg is actually not that far from reality, according to AHTS chapter President Joe Cuhaj.

"We have a huge corridor that can be completed in a relatively short period of time," Cuhaj said recently. That corridor, a 60-mile stretch along the Perdido River, is already on 18,000 acres of state property and just needs to be marked out, he said.

A planned Feb. 12 meeting at Spanish Fort is an attempt to develop more volunteers to help accomplish the trailbuilding.

"We're exploring right now, getting all our members out there to fan out and help plan the trail," Cuhaj said. "We're not only looking for the path of least resistance, but we want to make a unique and interesting trail to walk," he said.

The goal is for the Alabama Trail to be continuous, which will be a challenge, since few trails are already in existence. Trail developers also see the Alabama Trail linking up with the upstate Pinhoti Trail and other trails.



Cuhaj, a resident of Daphne for 20 years and author of "Hiking Alabama," said the project deserves the support of volunteers.

"This project will give something, especially to the Gulf Coast, that we currently do not have — a wilderness area where individuals and families can go out and explore nature, maybe camp out. It will also protect a greenway so wildlife can roam free as they should, something we are rapidly losing here on the coast, and provide additional income to local municipalities by bringing in eco-tourism dollars. "The trail will be a national and worldwide hiking destination."

Although the GET is not mentioned in the article, it shows where the Alabama Trail is planned to go. It goes close to the westernmost Florida border, and the corner is 30 miles west of the Florida Trail spur that is planned to be part of the GET. The planned Alabama Trail would pass

through the western districts of the Talladega National Forest, which is about 40 miles west of Flagg Mountain, the southern terminus of the Pinhoti Trail. That point is about 110 miles north of the corner of the Florida border (these distances would likely be longer on a hiking trail).

Preliminary planning is taking place to make the connection from Flagg Mountain (right now the southern-most point on the GET) to the Alabama Trail. The GET and Alabama Trail would be co-aligned from there to the southern end of the Alabama Trail.

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## Alabama Hiking Trail Society Trail News

The official announcement was made Feb. 3 about a purchase that has been in the works for several months. The Conservation Fund has purchased 762 acres of land that will lead to the connection of the Pinhoti Trail to Flagg Mountain at Weofgufka State Forest. [Read the announcement at AL.COM:](#)

[http://blog.al.com/spotnews/2011/02/conservation\\_fund\\_buys\\_762\\_acr.html](http://blog.al.com/spotnews/2011/02/conservation_fund_buys_762_acr.html)

This is big news for hikers in Alabama. With this acquisition and the eventual building of trail, backpackers will be able to hike the entire Appalachian range from the last mountain in the south all the way to Maine. Additionally, combine this acquisition with the Forever Wild property at the Coosa Wildlife Management Area to the west of

the state forest, the Eastern Continental and Great Eastern Trails in Alabama will have a large section of road walk removed, part of the missions of AHTS.

AHTS will be discussing our role with this new property during the general meeting at 5pm at our annual [conference at Monte Sano State Park](#). (<http://con2011.hikealabama.org/>) Please register and join us for this discussion of an amazing bit of news! – *Note-This has already taken place.*

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## Featured Section:



### Cumberland Trail

by Tim Hupp

The Cumberland Trail (CT) is the main part of the Great Eastern Trail in Tennessee. It runs in the eastern part of the state, parallel to the North Carolina state line, but west of Knoxville. From the north, it goes along the top of Cumberland Mountain, then into other mountains where Cumberland Mountain ends, and then mostly

in gorges cut into the Cumberland Plateau that is north of Chattanooga. It is marked with white blazes.

The CT passes through Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, Cove Lake State Park,

Frozen Head State Natural Area, Catoosa Wildlife Management Area, Laurel – Snow State Natural Area, and Prentice Cooper State Forest.

The GET coincides with the CT between its northern terminus on Tri-State Peak (TN/VA/KY) in Cumberland Gap National Historical Park and the southern terminus of Segment 2 Section 3 on

#### Great Eastern Trail Sections:

Crystal Hills Branch (Finger Lakes Trail)  
Mid State Trail  
Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail  
Standing Stone Trail  
Tuscarora Trail  
Headwaters Section  
Allegheny Trail/AT/Mary Draper Ingles Trail  
TuGuNu Section  
Pine Mountain Trail  
**Cumberland Trail**  
Georgia Pinhoti Trail  
Alabama Pinhoti Trail  
Alabama Trail

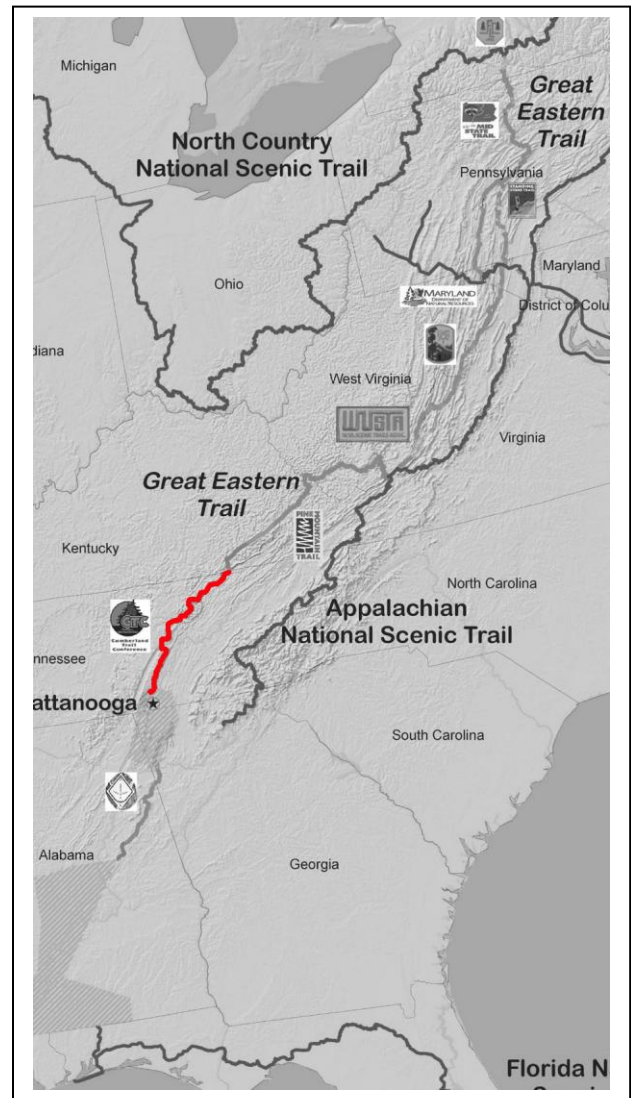
Montlake Road southwest of Soddy Daisy. This distance is estimated to be 241.7 miles upon completion of the trail. As of 1/1/2011, 113.8 miles are open for hiking and 127.9 miles are in various stages of land acquisition, trail design, or trail construction. The miles open for hiking are not continuous; the longest continuous stretch of open trail is 39.8 miles in Segments 11 and 12.

One of the major features of the CT is its waterfalls: Imodium Falls in Possum Gorge in the 3 gorges section, plus side trails to Stinging Creek Falls (35'), Laurel Falls (80'), and Snow Falls (35'), and the trail is planned to go by Ozone Falls. Along Piney River are White Pine Cascades and Hemlock Falls. In addition, there are numerous overlooks and rock formations: Window Rock and Devils Racecourse on Cumberland Mountain, Castle Rock and Mushroom Rock at Frozen Head, Anvil Rock, Rock Passage, and Rain House along Obed River, Windless Cave on Black Mountain, and Little Stone Door & Indian Rock House along Soddy Creek in the 3 gorges section. There are also several scenic overlook points. (There are other features on the CT south of the GET departure point.) In addition to the scenic points, there are many points along the trail where past mining is evident. More features should be revealed as the CT is filled in.

Due to the many gorges along the CT, many bridges have been built, and much sidehill trail construction has been needed. These have a way of slowing the pace of completing the trail, which is a major reason why the CT has not been completed. In addition, the emphasis on building trail has let some places be neglected in maintenance—the Obed Wild and Scenic River Section has not been cleared since 2006 and has a warning about that on its web page. (*A clearing expedition is planned for this upcoming June.*)

The CT crosses the following primary roads: US 25E at Cumberland Gap, US 25W at LaFollette, US 27 at Wartburg, I-40 & US 70 in the Crab Orchard and Ozone area, TN 30 at Dayton, and TN 111 near Soddy-Daisy. The longest segments of trail without road contact are 17 miles in the New River Section, 15 miles along Obed Wild and Scenic River, and 16 miles along Soddy Creek in the 3 gorges section. There are several towns along or near the Trail: Harrowgate, near Cumberland Gap, LaFollette, Caryville, Wartburg, Crab

Orchard, Spring City (on a road section), Dayton,



and Soddy-Daisy. South of the CT, the GET is planned to go through the city of Chattanooga. Stores and Post Offices should be available at these places. There is also a store near TN 111.

The total length of the Cumberland Trail is to be 267 miles (main trail), of which 242 miles will be part of the GET route. So far 114 of those GET miles are completed and 128 are planned, with 172 miles of road walk to currently bridge the gaps.

The Cumberland Trail could be thru-hiked using a series of road walks. From north to south, from Cumberland Gap to LaFollette, TN, it is 34 miles mostly along TN 63. Then there is the 40 mile section of the CT at the southern end of Cumberland Mountain and into the mountains of the northern Cumberland Plateau, which reach to an

elevation of about 3200'. The next trail section is near Frozen Head State Natural Area, which is just 7 miles by air away from the current trail in the New River section, but it requires a 40 mile road walk. This is the priority area of trail building by the CTC.

The Frozen Head section is 8 miles long, and then it is 11 miles along roads to the Obed Wild and Scenic River Section, which provides 15 miles of trail. Then there is 22 miles of road to Black Mountain, where 12 miles of trail is open. From there, it is 14 miles road to the Piney River Section, which has another 10 miles of trail. From there it is 29 miles on road to the Laurel-Snow, or The Falls hike, which is not a trail section, but a 9 mile hike from one point. From there it is 17 miles on road to the 31 mile trail section in the Three Gorges segment. At the south end of that section there is a 4.5 mile road walk on Mowbray Pike and Montlake Road to the point where the GET leaves the CT.

The CT has one shelter, in the Cumberland Mountain section, and 11 campsites. The Trail crosses numerous creeks, except on Cumberland Mountain, and water should be available from them.

GET signs are beginning to be put up, although most remain to be placed.

The CT is a Tennessee State Scenic Trail designed, built, maintained, and promoted by the Cumberland Trail Conference (CTC), an affiliate organization of the non-profit Tennessee Trails Association (TTA). CTC conducts its activities in cooperation with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. The Conference maintains an office in Crossville and is staffed by a full-time General Manager (Tony Hook) and an Office Manager (Marleya Pendleton). Temporary employees help with trail construction programs when funding is available.

Website for Cumberland Trail Conference:  
<http://www.cumberlandtrail.org/>

**Cumberland Trail Segments (12 – 3 plus part of Segment 2 are part of Great Eastern Trail):**

No.	Segment Name	Southern Terminus	Northern Terminus	Miles Open		Additional Miles Needed		Total Miles at Completion	
				Main Trail	Other trails	Main Trail	Other trails	Main Trail	Other trails
12	Cumberland Mountain	Cove Lake SP	Tri-State Peak, TN/KY/VA	12.7	0.5	31	0	43.7	0.5
11	New River	NE corner FHSP	Cove Lake SP	30.1	0	8.4	0	38.5	0
10	Frozen Head	Wartburg	NE corner FHSP	7.7	2.6	5	0	12.7	2.6
9	Obed Wild & Scenic River	Hebberts-burg Rd.	Wartburg	15.3	0	9.2	0	24.5	0
8	Crab Orchard Mountain	Ozone Falls/US-70	Hebberts-burg Rd.	0	0	16.7	0	16.7	0
7	Grassy Cove	Jewett Rd.	Ozone Falls/US-70	10.2	1.1	6	0.1	16.2	1.2
6	The Falls	Shut-In Gap Rd.	Jewett Rd.	0	1.1	13.4	1.4	13.4	2.5
5	Piney River	Wash Pelfrey Rd.	Shut-In Gap Rd.	4.0	5.9	10	0	14.0	5.9

No.	Segment Name	Southern Terminus	Northern Terminus	Miles Open		Additional Miles Needed		Total Miles at Completion	
4	Laurel-Snow	Leggett Rd.	Wash Pelfrey Rd.	2.8	6.9	23.2	0	26.0	6.9
3	Three Gorges	Mowbray Pike	Leggett Rd.	31.0	4.6	0	0	31.0	4.6
2	North Chickamauga Creek	US-127	Mowbray Pike	8.4	0.7	9.7	0	18.1	0.7
1	Tennessee River Gorge	Signal Point	US-127	6.9	26.9	5	0	11.9	26.9
Total				129.1	50.3	137.6	1.5	266.7	51.8

Notes

“Other trails” are connecting loop, spur, and access trails that are part of the Cumberland Trail.

“Miles Open” is the trail length measured on the ground by wheel, GPS, or other method.

“Additional Miles Needed” are estimates, not on-the-ground measurements.

*To help the CTC in their work of building the Cumberland Trail, please contribute to the CTC in whatever way you can.*

*Next issue: Crystal Hills Trail*

## Parallels

As the Great Eastern Trail is a second long trail in the Appalachians, there are automatically parallels between it and the Appalachian Trail. This is a series of articles discussing similarities and differences between the GET and the AT.

### Conception

In one sense, the Great Eastern Trail was conceived of together with the Appalachian Trail, by Benton MacKaye. In 1921 he put forth a plan for the Appalachians of a system of trails with the central Appalachian Trail running from Mt. Mitchell in North Carolina to Mt. Washington in New Hampshire. But the time the AT was actually built it followed a different plan, particularly in the southern states.

Today’s AT goes west of MacKaye’s suggestion south of Roanoke, VA, and east of that plan north of Roanoke (on the Blue Ridge) as far as the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania. But if you

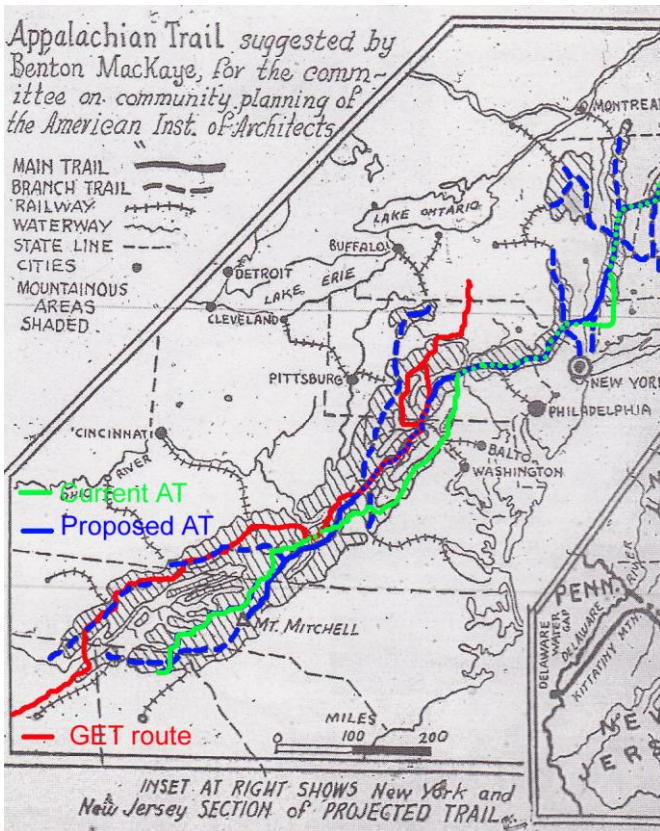
look closely at this map, you can see that from the Mason Dixon line (PA/MD border) to a little north

of Roanoke, the Great Eastern Trail follows the MacKaye plan. Also, the branch trail leading into the edge of Kentucky, and through Tennessee approximates the location of the Pine Mountain Trail and the Cumberland Trail, both parts of the GET. And the branch trail in western Pennsylvania looks a lot like the profile of the Mid State Trail, although it is further west than the actual MST.

For decades after the Appalachian Trail was built (1921 – 1937) there was some thought about a long trail in the western Appalachians, as noted in the GET Concept Plan:

After his legendary hike in 1948, Earl Shaffer, the first Appalachian Trail (AT) thru-hiker, came up with an idea for a new trail. He sent the idea to his brother John in a letter in 1952. Why not create a new trail west of the AT? Trails were already out there – they just needed to be linked together. Shaffer’s idea was first publicly

articulated by Stan Murray, the chairman of the ATC Board of Directors, in 1969, at the opening meeting of the Tennessee Trails Association. This new trail took name of



the Western Appalachian Alternative (WAA).

The Appalachian Trail became a huge success, and as time went on, became more and more popular (and crowded). In 2000 Lloyd MacAskill of PATC published an article in the *Appalachian Trailway News* calling attention to the existing trails to the west of the AT and saying “Don’t look now, but parts are already in place.” He named some of the various trails that could be linked to provide a western alternative.

In the fall of 2003 the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) proposed to the Southeast Foot Trails Coalition (SEFTC)

which had just formed in Chattanooga, that the two organizations begin discussing such a project. SEFTC accepted the proposal and in an executive committee meeting in April of 2004 endorsed it as a central organizing theme and Coalition objective. The idea was to make certain southeast foot trails part of this new trail.

American Hiking Society (AHS) and the National Park Service/Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program, which had partnered to form SEFTC, offered to assist in the early organizational effort. In the fall of 2004 NPS/RTCA, AHS, and PATC signed a memorandum of agreement.

In May of 2005 a group of representatives from Mid-Atlantic trail clubs, and National Park Service officials, met at a PATC cabin in southern Pennsylvania and formed the Mid-Atlantic Foot Trails Coalition (MAFTC). In November of 2005 representatives from SEFTC and MAFTC selected the name, Great Eastern Trail.

## How Many GET miles have you hiked?

So far, no one that I know of has hiked all of the Great Eastern Trail. I would like to print the names and mileages of people who have hiked a fair portion of the GET. Include only the miles of the GET route. For instance, if you have hiked the 330 miles of the Allegheny Trail, only 41 miles is currently on the GET route (more may be added later). Use only 41 for your GET mileage. You can add together the different local sections to make your total GET mileage.

I plan to include a listing in upcoming issues of those who submit their total mileages.

*Due to room, I don't have a Trail story this issue. Please submit any Trail Stories you may have, either hiking or working on the Great Eastern Trail.*

## Photo Gallery

(correction – in issue 1-1, the bottom right view was Big Schloss viewed from Tibbet Knob)

These pictures were taken from the Cumberland Trail Club website:



Imodium Falls



Castle Rock



Bridge over Piney River



Laurel Falls

### Web addresses & emails:

GET website: <http://www.greateastertrail.net/>

GET Guidebook (Hancock, MD to White Sulphur Springs, WV):  
<http://www.brownmtnphotoq.com/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=122>

Email: GET Newsletter: [Hupp\\_Tim@msn.com](mailto:Hupp_Tim@msn.com)

Email GETA President Tom Johnson about Great Eastern Trail: [johnts25@gmail.com](mailto:johnts25@gmail.com)