

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7884

To amend the National Trails System Act to designate the Benton MacKaye National Scenic Trail, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 27, 2022

Mr. COHEN (for himself, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. COOPER, and Mr. DESJARLAIS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To amend the National Trails System Act to designate the Benton MacKaye National Scenic Trail, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Benton MacKaye Na-
5 tional Scenic Trail Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that the Benton MacKaye Trail—

8 (1) is a scenic, nonmotorized trail that traverses
9 approximately 287 miles over some of the most re-

1 owned forests and mountains in the States of Geor-
2 gia, Tennessee, and North Carolina;

3 (2) showcases a wide variety of scenic views, in-
4 cluding high elevation peaks, mature forests, and se-
5 cluded waterfalls, and passes through wilderness rich
6 with biodiversity;

7 (3) passes through six designated Wilderness
8 Areas, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park,
9 and the Chattahoochee, Cherokee, and Nantahala
10 National Forests;

11 (4) provides a wide array of easily accessible
12 hikes for novice and intermediate hikers, as well as
13 more challenging trails for backpacking and end-to-
14 end thru hikes;

15 (5) supports economic opportunities for numer-
16 ous rural communities that benefit from the trail's
17 visitors spending their money on accommodations,
18 food, and outdoor supplies;

19 (6) runs from Springer Mountain in Georgia,
20 through Tennessee, and extends through the Great
21 Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina;
22 and

23 (7) is physically accessible and can be main-
24 tained at a minimal cost because—

1 (A) the Benton MacKaye Trail has been
2 maintained at its current length since 2005;

3 (B) 95 percent of the Benton MacKaye
4 Trail is located on Federal public land; and

5 (C) the Benton MacKaye Trail has been
6 successfully constructed, maintained, and man-
7 aged by the Benton MacKaye Trail Association
8 since 1980.

9 **SEC. 3. BENTON MACKAYE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL.**

10 Section 5(a) of the National Trails System Act (16
11 U.S.C. 1244(a)) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
12 lowing:

13 “(31) BENTON MACKAYE NATIONAL SCENIC
14 TRAIL.—

15 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Benton MacKaye
16 National Scenic Trail, a trail extending approxi-
17 mately 287 miles across the States of Georgia,
18 Tennessee, and North Carolina, as generally de-
19 picted on the map entitled ‘Benton MacKaye
20 Trail Overview Map’, dated January 6, 2022.

21 “(B) AVAILABILITY OF MAP.—The map
22 described in subparagraph (A) shall be on file
23 and available for public inspection in the appro-
24 priate offices of the Forest Service and the Na-
25 tional Park Service.

1 “(C) ADMINISTRATION.—The Benton
2 MacKaye National Scenic Trail shall be admin-
3 istered by the Secretary of Agriculture, acting
4 through the Chief of the Forest Service, in con-
5 sultation with—
6 “(i) other Federal agencies;
7 “(ii) State, Tribal, regional, and local
8 agencies; and
9 “(iii) the Benton MacKaye Trail Asso-
10 ciation.”.

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