

Alabama Hiking Trail Society  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## HISTORIC WEEKEND FOR HIKERS SET FOR MARCH

Hikers from Around the Country Set to Converge on Cheaha and Celebrate an 83-Year Old Dream

Hundreds of hikers from around the country will converge atop Cheaha Mountain for the largest hiking and backpacking conference in the state and one of the largest in the Southeast.

The event, scheduled for March 14-16, is being presented by the non-profit Alabama Hiking Trail Society. The weekend will feature something for all outdoor lovers according to AHTS President, Mike Kennedy.

“The weekend will be full of fun and information for everyone who loves to get outside with nature. Whether you want to learn more about the environment, the history of the region, or get backpacking and hiking tips, Cheaha will be the place to be.”

According to Kennedy, the conference is for everyone no matter what your level of hiking or backpacking experience. Some of the guest speakers that will be featured over the weekend include  
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The event will also feature the 3rd annual photo contest sponsored by Alabama State Parks. Official rules and entry forms are available at the AHTS website, [www.hikealabama.org](http://www.hikealabama.org).

Throughout the weekend there will be food, raffles, silent auctions, and plenty of entertainment. The weekend culminates on Sunday March 16 with an historic event.

83-years ago, a man by the name of Benton MacKaye had a dream of building an Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine with an extension into Alabama where the last of the Appalachians can be found.

20-years ago, a young North Carolina lawyer, Michael Leonard, decided the time was right to complete MacKaye’s dream. Through the efforts of elected officials and tireless work by volunteers on the ground, that dream will become a reality as Governor Bob Riley officially dedicates the connection of Alabama’s long path, the Pinhoti Trail, to the world famous Appalachian Trail.

The Alabama Hiking Trail Society is a non-profit organization and Alabama’s statewide hiking organization. Founded in 2001, the AHTS has members from Huntsville to Mobile. The mission of the AHTS is to “promote, protect, maintain, and develop hiking trails throughout Alabama.” This annual conference is their chief fund raising effort for the year so that they can continue to protect not only the trails but Alabama’s environment as well.

The Conference is sponsored by Hyundai of Alabama, Fontana Village Resort, The Copy Center of Montgomery, Alabama State Parks, Southland Concrete, and McDonald’s of South Alabama.

For more information about the conference or to register, visit AHTS online at [HIKEALABAMA.ORG](http://HIKEALABAMA.ORG). You can also call AHTS at (251) 533-1812 or by email [ahts@hikealabama.org](mailto:ahts@hikealabama.org).

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If you would like more information on this topic or to schedule an interview, please contact Joe Cuhaj at (251) 533-1812 or email Joe at [jcuahaj.vppublicity@hikealabma.org](mailto:jcuahaj.vppublicity@hikealabma.org).

Photos from past conferences and the Pinhoti Trail are available upon request.