

## **Ann Nemanic Remarks/ Saturday, June 2**

We've all heard the words "TAKE A HIKE". Depending upon the delivery, it can take on many meanings. However, here in the beautiful Laurel Highlands TAKE A HIKE means connecting with nature. TAKE A HIKE allows someone to experience life a slower pace...to become encased in a canopy of trees – from the lush green we see today to Autumn's splendor just a few months from now. TAKE A HIKE means an opportunity to listen. To listen to your own thoughts, the conversation of your hiking companion, or the eternal chatter of Mother Nature from the forest floor to the tree tops above.

Today we applaud those who believe that dirt on your soles is a good thing because by TAKING A HIKE you put an imprint on your soul – S O U L. The Laurel Highlands is blessed with over 700 miles of trail. Hiking, Biking, Walking, Mountain Biking. And, more trails are being cleared and built, each and every year. A mecca for the outdoor enthusiast for sure....that's the Laurel Highlands.

Today we gather to thank those who volunteer and who dedicate their career path to preserving and promoting our outdoor assets. Do you know how LUCKY you are to love what you do. I'm sure at times it can be thankless, but today, please know we are thankful for time and tender care you give this Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail. A bucket list for many, a beast to conquer for some, a solid soulful memory for those who hike her end to end.

It matters not if someone hikes the entire trail – what matters is they are outside. One step at a time. One step closer to nature and the beauty and serenity she provides.