



Benton MacKaye Trail Association

P.O. Box 53271, Atlanta, GA 30355-1271

WWW.BMTA.ORG

August, 2005

FOUNDERS DAY HIKE, JUNE 25, 2005

By Tony Oldfield

By any measure this hike was a great success and had elements of everything enjoyable. It had dry, sunny weather, a good turnout of members and guests, a gentle hike, a beautiful vista to see at lunch, great company, much laughter with the reminiscences of the five Founders among us, and even a little romance!

The hike was to walk the first section of the Benton MacKaye trail completed exactly 25 years ago to the day.

Thirty of us introduced ourselves at the start and at the civilized hour of 10:30 am we slowly walked the 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Skeenah Gap to the top of Rhodes Mountain. Points of historical interest were shown as we ascended.



After lunch Nancy Shofner explained that the first section of the Benton MacKaye Trail was completed here because of the pre-existence of the old Appalachian and Duncan Ridge Trails from Springer Mountain north to the top of Rhodes Mountain.

Then other Founders told us of some of the funny happenings that had occurred in the early days and there was much laughter. Also we wished all happiness to two members who were celebrating their 19th Wedding Anniversary that day. We descended to enjoy watermelon in the Friendship Baptist Church's open sided pavilion where we had parked our cars.

About ten people then decided to walk part of Section 2 of the Benton MacKaye Trail from GA Route 60 to the suspension bridge over the Toccoa River. Many then retired to the usual dinner rendezvous of the Pink Pig Restaurant in Cherry Log to round out a great day.

(continued on page 2)

ANNUAL WALK-THROUGH COVERS SPRINGER MTN. TO DEALS GAP

Coming August 13th

Your help wanted!

The annual walk-through enables us to get a picture of the entire BMT on a single day. This year we have a lot to cover, from Springer Mountain to Deals Gap where we enter the Smokies. That's about 180 miles of trail. We walk Saturday, August 13th.

We need (lots of) people to walk sections as well as some who will drop off and pick-up hikers at trailheads. Can you help?

Walk-through coordinators are Tom Keene for Georgia, and Bill Ristom for Tennessee/ North Carolina. (The Smokies are not included in this year's walk-through.) We will assign a pair (for safety) of hikers to walk every section of the trail and to note the trail's condition, including any maintenance needs. About 4:00 PM participants will converge at the Pink Pig, and probably a second location in Tennessee, to share results and their tales of high adventure. Written reports will go to Tom or Bill to plan future worktrips.

Please volunteer early for the walk-through to simplify planning. Grab a partner, or we will match you with someone. Contact Tom Keene for Georgia (770-422-4838 or tkeene@kennesaw.edu), or Bill Ristom for TN/NC (423-476-2945 or ristoms@hotmail.com). Indicate a section you prefer to walk, or just volunteer "as needed." (Remember that maintainers may NOT walk their own sections.)

Or volunteer to shuttle walkers. Several breakfast meeting places will be used depending on the location you walk. For details, ask Tom or Bill when you contact them.

See you August 13th!

HELP WANTED

Someone is needed to take over the scrapbook project started by Liz Burlingame. Anyone interested may contact Steve Cartwright at scdcmc@bellsouth.net

FOUNDERS DAY HIKE, JUNE 25, 2005
(continued from page 1)

The attendees were: Claire Broadwell, Wes Clonts, Walt Cook, Lyn and Clark Cooper, Bruce Dalton, Linda Davis, Ralph Duggan, Bill Hamrick, Sandra Haynes, members of the Keene family including Ben, Jane, Kathy, Richard and Tom, Doug Kleiber, Julian Le Roy, Terry Miller, T.O. Mitchell, Tony Oldfield, George Owen, Ted Reissing, Nancy Shofner, Bill, Mary Jon and Rhonda Shubert, John Carlyle Smith, Nancy and Ted Spetnagel, and Lynn Strubank



Former BMTA President Ted Reissing shares three brief humorous stories from the club early days at lunch.
(photo by George Owens)

Question-of-the-Month

Got a question? Send it to: Question@BMTA.org

Q: When hiking the Joyce Kilmer/Slickrock-Citico Wilderness recently, we noticed some impressive new sign posts with engraved trail markings. Bears had already chewed the corners of one post but because the lettering was in the middle, it was not damaged. Brilliant design and thanks to the BMTA and the Forest Service for marking these trails but there's one question. Why do a few of the signs point the way on the BMT in one direction but (apparently) not the other?

Ken Jones, the one most responsible for there being a 300-mile BMT now, notes:

In the Citico Wilderness, there are two backbone trails now - the BMT and the South Fork Citico. The posts give preference to these two backbone trails. If an intersection forms a 'T' where a backbone trail is the top of the 'T', then the posts were routed and placed so that both northbound and southbound hikers can read the post. If the intersection forms a 'T' where the backbone trail makes a right or left turn, then the posts were routed to favor either the northbound or southbound hiker continuing on the backbone trail. If the intersection forms a 'Y', then the posts were routed to favor the person who must choose to bear left or bear right. Anyone approaching the Y from the top forks just hikes straight ahead to continue on the backbone trail. This was the best reasoning I could see to use with posts being routed on one side only. Whether it was the best choice, time will tell.

NEW MEMBERS

By Tony Oldfield

Please welcome new members:

Chris Arrendale and Jill Pluckhahn of Decatur, GA
Judith and Wayne Lunsford of Tucker, GA
Jimmy Raybon of Sarasota, FL

We will be issuing to all members a list of current members including their home addresses and telephone numbers, plus email address if known. Should any member wish this information to be suppressed then please advise Tony Oldfield at paco1784@att.net or 770 939 7906 by August 15, 2005?

DON'T FORGET
Set Your Watch Back 25 Years!

The BMTA 25th Anniversary Dinner will be held
on **OCTOBER 15TH** in Blue Ridge, GA
Tickets are by **Advanced Sales Only**
*Watch the mail this summer
for your invitation*

See page 3 for additional information

April Work Trip Report

by George Owen

This work trip report is late, folks, and for that I apologize. Anyway, here goes.

The day dawned pleasant enough and continued so as we met for breakfast at the usual Ellijay Waffle King for breakfast. Later that morning all ten of us arrived safely at our "secret" little parking area on Forest Service Road 58B off FS58. From this point it was a stout uphill bushwack to the trail; fortunately the undergrowth had not yet greened out much.

The day was spent reclearing the trail from the first summit north of "No-Name Gap" to a bit south of Bryson Gap. This included cutting some fair-sized downed trees and limbs. I must admit there wasn't quite as much work to be done as at first anticipated, but we still stayed busy enough. By mid-afternoon it was back to the vehicles and, for some, out to a wonderful early meal at the Pink Pig. Mission accomplished!

My thanks go out to Tom Keene and Walt Cook for their assistant leadership in this day, and to all who came and worked.

Attendees: Wes Clonts, Walt Cook, Mike Curley, Eric Eades, Lawrence Jump, Tom Keene, T. O. Mitchell, George Owen, Virginia Slack, Gerrit Voogt.

Need updated Work Trip and Fun Hike Info?

Check the "Scheduled Activity" link on the Homepage of www.BMTA.org. Always available and up-to-date!

EDITOR'S NOTES

The Calendar of Events (see back page) is as up-to-date and accurate as the information supplied to the editor. Please send corrections or additions to editor as follows:

Wade Harper, 1106 Lincoln Dr., Marietta, Ga 30066. Or call me at 770-591-4700. Or, preferably, email me at: wadehh@bellsouth.net

Deadline for receiving articles for publication is the 2nd of the month. This newsletter is usually mailed 10 to 14 days after that. If you send pictures (other than by email), be sure to include a SSAE if you want the pictures returned.

Please send all name, address, etc. changes to: Tony Oldfield at 1784 Kanawha Drive, Stone Mountain, GA 30087-2123; email: paco1784@att.net

Tennessee Maintenance Trip - June 11

By Chuck Hall

Three weather hardened volunteers turned up this dreary, rainy morning. Chuck Hall asked if this trip should be rescheduled. Lamar Powell said we should go, rain or shine. When we arrived at the trailhead, the downpour had slowed to a trickle and by the time we reached the Fork Ridge trail to work, it had stopped. As we began brushing, the wind picked up and the skies cleared. Temperatures in the 60s and 70s with a good breeze, which kept the few bugs at bay, made perfect working conditions.

When we arrived at the first place that needed sidehill work, instructions on proper technique were given. Our work party arrived back at the truck about 6 PM. Plenty of sidehill work remains which should give us an excuse to come back another day. Enjoying this great day in the woods were:

Lamar Powell
Bill Ristom
Chuck Hall

Total volunteer hours were 37.5, all in the Ocoee/Hiwassee District of the Cherokee National Forest.

25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION / CATERED DINNER / ANNUAL MEETING

Please mark your calendars for October 15, 2005 - this evening we will have a catered dinner to celebrate 25 years of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association. This will also be the Annual Meeting for the organization, but with official activities minimized. We will be reminiscing and celebrating! Registration will be required, due to space and food preparation. Please look for the registration form and send it in as soon as you can. Arrangements for overnight accommodations will need to be made on your own. Contact a committee member regarding any concerns. (Committee: David Blount, Steve Cartwright, Darcy Douglas, Tom Keene, George Owen, Bill Ross) We look forward to a wonderful evening together!



Work trips and other events

Members are reminded that it is important to call the trip leader prior to the event to confirm times and meeting places.

August 13 – We will walk the Georgia and Tenn/NC sections to Deals Gap.. If you would like to do a section in: Georgia, please contact Tom Keene, 770-422-4838, tkeene@kennesaw.edu for Tennessee or North Carolina, contact Bill Ristom, 423-476-2945, ristoms@hotmail.com.

Hikers are asked to report on trail conditions and hazards; brush, treadway, blowdowns, etc. This helps Maintenance Directors target work trips and lets Section Maintainers know what needs doing. (Section Maintainers are asked not to walk their own section.) All are invited as we try to cover the whole trail in a single day.

August 20. FUN HIKE - Fall Branch to Weaver Creek Road and back - water at beginning, end, and during lunch for this hot August day - please join us - Please call Darcy Douglas at 404-497-0818 to get details regarding times and meeting place. Remember to bring plenty of drinking water, a lunch, rain gear, and to wear comfortable shoes. Long pants are advised this time of year.

September 10 - Tennessee Work Trip: Unlike much of the trail in TN/NC, this location has easy access with work starting just a short distance from trailhead parking at Farr Gap. We'll attempt to repair the sidehilled trail going north (east) which has been badly damaged by years of illegal horse use. With enough help, we'll make it all the way to the wilderness boundary, about 0.4 mi. Cool temps in the higher elevations should make this a great late Summer outing. Possible carpool arrangements from Ducktown, Chattanooga, Cleveland, Etowah, Maryville or Tellico Plains. If you would like to lead this work trip or for info, call Bill Ristom, 423-476-2945, ristoms@hotmail.com

'September 17 - Fun Hike. Please mark your calendars! George Owen will be leading this hike and details will be published in the next Newsletter and on the Website shortly.'

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*Bob Ruby
680 N. Island Dr.
Atlanta Ga. 30327*

BENTON MACKAYE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

You are cordially invited to attend the 25th Anniversary Celebration of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association! Volunteers have worked in many capacities over this time span to conceive, design, and build this wonderful trail of ours. Our Forest Service and Park Service Partners have also been a part of the involved process of creating a trail. Together, we will celebrate on a Saturday evening in the fall in Blue Ridge, Georgia. This will also constitute the Annual Meeting for the organization.

WHAT: Banquet - catered sit down meal
Annual Meeting / Elections
Celebration of our past 25 years

WHEN: Saturday, October 15, 2005
4:00 - 9:00

WHERE: Blue Ridge, Georgia - Community Center of Appalachian Community Bank -
This is on a hill on the highway on the north side of town, across the highway from Ingles
and just west of the Forest Service Office (map on back of sheet).

COST: \$10.00 for meals for adults
\$ 5.00 for meals for children 12 and younger

DRESS: Business Casual

SPEAKERS: Tom Speaks, USFS, Cherokee National Forest
David Sherman, Father of the BMT
Several Past Presidents

******As this is a catered event, we will not be accepting reservations after September 15.******

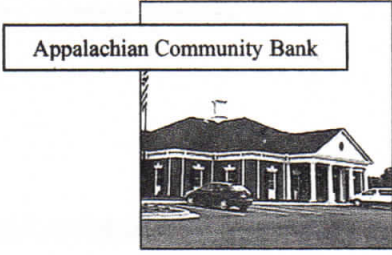
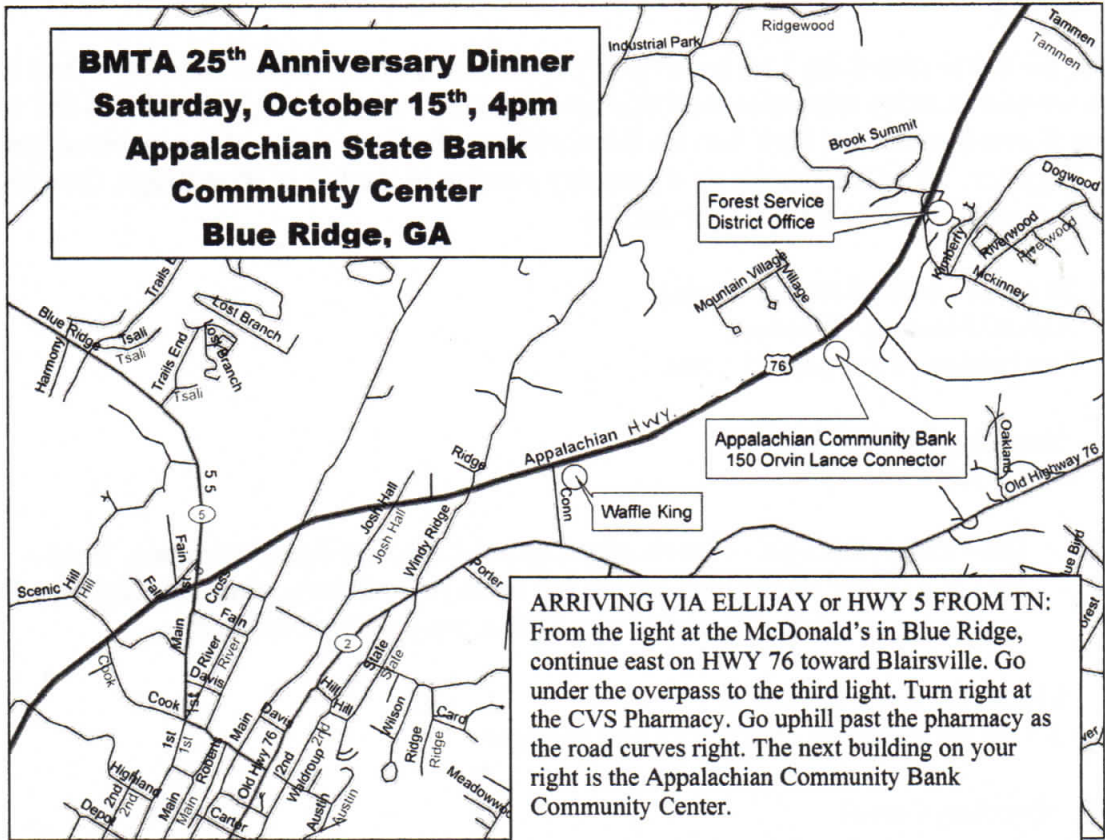
Checks should be made out to the BMTA. You can give this to a board member, committee member, or mail it. Please do not send cash through the mail. Please make your commitment and send in your registration!

Mail the form below to: BMTA
c/o David Blount
3325 Oregon Trail
Marietta, Georgia 30060

Enclosed please find \$ _____, reservations for dinner for _____ adult meals and _____ children's meals.

Name(s): _____

Email address for confirmation: _____



ARRIVING VIA ELLIJAY or HWY 5 FROM TN:
 From the light at the McDonald's in Blue Ridge, continue east on HWY 76 toward Blairsville. Go under the overpass to the third light. Turn right at the CVS Pharmacy. Go uphill past the pharmacy as the road curves right. The next building on your right is the Appalachian Community Bank Community Center.

ARRIVING FROM BLAIRSVILLE:
 Once you enter Blue Ridge go past the U.S. Forest Service district office and a Marathon gas station on the left to the second traffic light. Turn left at the CVS Pharmacy. Go uphill past the pharmacy as the road curves right. The next building on your right is the Appalachian Community Bank Community Center.

Five rooms are on hold until September 15 at the Day's Inn of Blue Ridge, located next to the Waffle King. These may be reserved by you on a first come, first serve basis. This will be a very busy weekend in the mountains, so hotel reservations need to be made promptly. There are many other overnight accommodations in Blue Ridge and neighboring communities. Please make these arrangements at your convenience.