



# Benton MacKaye Trail Association

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

WWW.BMTA.ORG

September, 2005

## 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. Keynote speakers will be Tom Speaks, USFS and David Sherman. Former BMTA President Edwin Dale will share his thoughts too.

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!

## OCTOBER 15 ANNIVERSARY HIKE, BREAKFAST

By: George Owen

Join us early on the day of our October 15 big 25th Anniversary Dinner for a delightful moderate hike close to Blue Ridge. The **hike will leave at 9:00 a.m. from the parking lot of the Appalachian State Bank Community Center** next to the CVS Pharmacy on Highway 76 in Blue Ridge. It will be several miles long, and will be on part of the Benton MacKaye Trail in the Rich Mountain Range just south of town. The trek is scheduled to conclude before 1:00 p.m., with time and places provided for you to change into your clothing for the big anniversary event that later afternoon. **There is NO preregistration required for this hike - just show up!**

Those so desiring can meet with others from the BMTA for **breakfast at the Village Restaurant** in the shopping center at the Aska connector turnoff shopping center in Blue Ridge, just off Hwy. 76 near Pizza Hut. Meet for breakfast **at 8:00 a.m.** You can contact George Owen about any other info needed on this event. (See next column for contact information)

## JOINT BMTA/GATC ANNIVERSARY HIKE OCT. 16 FALL COLOR HIKE, WAYAH BALD TO U.S. 64 ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Leader: George Owen; Co-Leader: Chuck Logan

RATING: Moderately difficult, based primarily on length of 10.1 miles

Here is a special event offered for **Sunday, October 16**, the day after our great 25th Anniversary Banquet.

This is a joint anniversary venture of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association, commemorating its 25th anniversary, and the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club, celebrating its 75th anniversary - together making 2005 the year of completion for 100 years of service and fun. Both your leaders go "way back" in their own involvement with Georgia's "two greatest trail clubs."

We will breakfast together in the Dillard/Franklin area, run the shuttle, then begin our celebrative hike. The middle of October is usually the peak of autumn color at the heights along the Appalachian Trail from Wayah Bald southward through the Nantahala Range. Adding to the awesome scenic beauty, we plan to offer some wonder of our own as we spend time lunching and reminiscing atop the 360-degree view of Siler Bald, celebrating our joint one hundred years of building, maintaining, and trekking. So come join us for this special festive hike amid one of the most beautiful scenic areas at the most colorful time of the year.

**YOU MUST PREREGISTER:** To register, contact George Owen, Blairsville, (home) 706-374-4716 or (cell) 706-897-3366 or e-mail at [owenga@ellijay.com](mailto:owenga@ellijay.com) or Chuck Logan, Metro Atlanta, (home) 678-526-5341 or e-mail at [gnldlogan@aol.com](mailto:gnldlogan@aol.com)

## HELP WANTED

Someone is needed to take over the scrapbook project started by Liz Burlingame. Anyone interested may contact Steve Cartwright at [sdcmmc@bellsouth.net](mailto:sdcmmc@bellsouth.net)

Georgia Maintainer Hours  
between April 1 and July 22, 2005  
Recorded by Tom Keene

Maintainer	Work	Travel.	Total	Date
Blount, David	3.5	3	6.5	4/17/2005
Cook, Walt	6	6	12	5/18/2005
	4.5	4	8.5	5/27/2005
	6	4.5	10.5	6/14/2005
	6	4.5	10.5	7/5/2005
Dalton, Bruce	6	5	11	5/28/2005
	6	5	11	6/24/2005
Dalton, Andrea	6	5	11	5/28/2005
	6	5	11	6/24/2005
Dominy, Marty	3	1	4	4/10/2005
Douglas, Darcy	8	4	12	5/7/2005
Dumas, Joyce	2	3.5	5.5	4/18/2005
Dumas, Larry	2	3.5	5.5	4/18/2005
	1	2	3	5/12/2005
	5	1	6	6/6/2005
	4.5	1	5.5	6/30/2005
	6	1	7	7/19/2005
Eades, Eric	4.5	3	7.5	6/12/2005
	5.5	4	9.5	7/2/2005
Ettman, Ema	6	4.5	10.5	7/5/2005
Jump, L.	5.5	3	8.5	6/11/2005
Keene, Jane	3	1	4	6/21/2005
Keene, Tom	6	4	10	5/18/2005
	7	2	9	5/1/2005
	5.5	3	8.5	6/11/2005
	6	0.5	6.5	6/14/2005
	3	1	4	6/21/2005
	1.5	0.5	2	6/26/2005
Kleiber, Doug	3	0	3	6/18/2005
McClure, D	5	6	11	4/20/2005
Miller, Terry	10	1	11	4/16/2005
Mitchell, T.O.	5.5	1	6.5	5/9/2005
	5	2	7	7/8/2005
Owen, George	3	1	4	4/10/2005
Prosser, Barb	4	4	8	5/7/2005
Prosser, Paul	4	4	8	5/7/2005
Pullen, Mike	10	4	14	4/16/2005
	3	2	5	5/1/2005
Ross, Bill	5.5	4	9.5	7/2/2005
	3	6	9	11/9/2004
	2	6	8	12/17/2004
	2	6	8	2/5/2005
	2	6	8	3/25/2005
Shubert, Bill	2	6	8	4/11/2005
	2	6	8	5/18/2005
	2	6	8	6/21/2005
Shubert, MaryJon	2	6	8	4/11/2005
	2	6	8	5/18/2005
	2	6	8	6/21/2005
Shubert, Rhonda	10	1	11	4/16/2005
	10	1	11	5/3/2005
Street, Mike	2	3	5	5/1/2005
Street, Mona	2	3	5	5/1/2005
Voogt, Curt	7	4	11	5/1/2005
Yoder, Chris	2.5	0.5	3	4/13/2005
Yoder, Del	3	1	4	3/13/2005
	2.5	0.5	3	4/13/2005
	1	0.5	1.5	5/1/2005
	2.5	0.5	3	5/22/2005
	6	1	7	7/9/2005
<b>Totals</b>	<b>262.5</b>	<b>190.5</b>	<b>453</b>	

## Question-of-the-Month

Got Question? Send to [Question@BMTA.org](mailto:Question@BMTA.org)

**Q:** Congratulations on the completion of your trail! I'm planning to thru-hike it in September and have a few questions. Should I start at Springer Mountain or at Davenport Gap? If I want days that aren't too hot and nights that aren't too cold, is September the best month to hike? Also, I've got Tim Homan's "Hiking the Benton MacKaye Trail", have downloaded your extension maps, and have the Smoky Mountains map but do you offer a single map or trail guide of the entire trail?

**Steve Cartwright, President of the BMTA replies:**

Thank you for your interest in, and desire to hike, the Benton MacKaye Trail. I personally think September would be a better time to hike the trail. It is the consensus of most folks that hiking the trail south to north is somewhat less arduous. At present, there is no guide book or single (detailed) map of the trail. As an addition to what you have, I would recommend rechecking our web site for updates and possibly some information on trail towns, drop offs, etc. We will be working on this over the next few weeks. Also, there is a new book out that has information about the BMT and the existing trails the BMT follows in "Hiking Guide to the Cherokee National Forest", 2nd edition (2005), William H. Skelton, editor, published by University of Tennessee Press. Also, an updated Trails Illustrated map of the Ocoee/Tellico ranger districts (Cherokee National Forest) should be out in the near future and should have the BMT designated. I hope this is helpful.

## NEW MEMBERS

By Tony Oldfield

Please welcome the following new members:

Ann and David Anderson of Cleveland, TN,  
Mathew Briggs of Sevierville, TN,  
Ernest Engman of Maryville, TN,  
Kathy Rowell and Matt Friel of Chattanooga, TN,  
Lucinda Hastings of Atlanta, GA,  
The Korean Alpine Club of Georgia,  
Jim Lumpkins of Morristown, TN,  
Dan and Claudia Muse of Weaverville, NC,  
Elliot Myers of Cumming, GA,  
Bob Ruby of Atlanta, GA  
Scott Wright of Roswell, GA.

## Grand Opening Celebration a Success!

By: Diana Ristom

The Benton MacKaye Trail is officially open! Well over 100 people came out to Mud Gap on July 16 to celebrate the Grand Opening of the newest long-distance trail in the country. After the vine (ribbon) cutting, attendees hiked in two groups, one north to Beech Gap and the other south to Whigg Meadow. Linda Davis and George Owen reported that the southbound hikers sang our National Anthem on top of Whigg Meadow and then listened while a group from the Korean Alpine Club of Georgia sang the Korean National Anthem, a passage of which extols the beautiful mountains. After the hikes, many went on to Rattler Ford Group Campground to continue the festivities which included another hike, this one to Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest followed by a chili supper, the reading of a poem written by Steve Winslett, lively harmonica tunes played around the campfire by Joe Cirvello of the Carolina Mountain Club, and of course, lots of wonderful fellowship.

Speakers for the ceremony included, in order, BMTA officers Dick Evans, Darcy Douglas, Ken Jones, and President Stephen Cartwright; then Morgan Sommerville of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (formerly the Appalachian Trail Conference), George Minnigh of the National Park Service, and Tom Speaks of the USDA Forest Service. Thanks to Dick Evans who planned and coordinated this once-in-a-lifetime event (along with his wife, Margaret) and to all who helped celebrate this joyous and historic event."

## Small But Mighty

by Bill Ross

The July work trip to the Hemp Top section of the BMT was a complete success. This section is notorious for the fast and thick growth of plants on the trail. Seven BMTA workers went up on Saturday and in four hours the trail from Spanish Oak Gap to Hemp Top was swingbladed, as well as the one-mile approach trail from Dally Gap. How did this small group clear so many overgrown miles of trail in such a short time? Well, they didn't. At least not by themselves.

This work trip was our second annual combined trip with the trail volunteers of the Forest Service's Armuchee/Cohutta District. More than two dozen Forest Service volunteers, some on horseback and many on foot, staged an assault on the briars and intrusive growth along the trail. Organized and led by rangers from the district office these volunteers helped us do what we couldn't have done alone. We owe them thanks.

And thanks also go to the BMTA members who braved the heat and took up the challenge that is swingblading. They were Wes Clonts, Darcy Douglas, Eric Eades, Laurice Haney, Tom Keene, George Owen and Bill Ross. Because of the heat the work day was shortened (no complaints) and the job still got done. Work hours may not reflect the amount of work done, but the miles of cleared trail certainly do. Total travel time for the BMTA contingent was 21 hours; total work time was 25 hours.

### Need updated Work Trip and Fun Hike Info?

Check the "Scheduled Activity" link  
on the Homepage of [www.BMTA.org](http://www.BMTA.org) .  
Always available and up-to-date!

## Tennessee/North Carolina Work Trip - July 9

### Beech Gap to Whigg Meadow

by Dick Evans

"Ask and you shall receive." A great motto for this Work Trip. To prepare for the Grand Opening of the Trail, we had put out a general call for volunteers to help spruce up the stretch between Whigg Meadow and Beech Gap for July 9th. That call was answered! Thirteen folks showed up on a beautiful Saturday to brushcut, lop, dig and tote to make the trails nice for the Celebration. We were joined by a reporter and a photographer from the Asheville Citizen Times newspaper who were doing an article on the Trail. Despite ominous signs, it never rained, although some of us wished for some rain to wash off the sweat, but a great trail work day was enjoyed by all.

Total volunteer hours for the trip were: 141  
Reported for the Tellico Ranger District of the Cherokee National Forest

Work: 38 Travel: 34 Total: 72

Reported for the Cheoah Ranger District of the Nantahala National Forest

Work: 53 Travel: 16 Total: 69

## NEEDS – Photos

Recent demands for photos along the BMT have revealed the need for a library of images. This is where YOU come in! Needed are all types of shots: vistas, water features, hikers, flora and fauna - any pictures taken along the BMT. Your photo could be used in a magazine, newspaper, presentation, on our Display Board, or on our website, and you will be credited as the photographer. If you have photos that you would like contribute to the library, please send them to Diana Ristom, 161 Hillview Dr. NW, Cleveland, TN 37312 or email to [ristoms@hotmail.com](mailto:ristoms@hotmail.com). Emailed pictures should be scanned at a resolution of at least 300 dpi. If you would like your photos returned please include a SASE.

## SEPT. 17 FUN HIKE IN TENNESSEE

Leader: George Owen

This third Saturday hike, one of our new fun trek series, will give you a chance to visit two new trails in Tennessee. Both are off Tennessee Hwy. 68 north of the Hiwassee River, and total hike length will be a little over seven miles. We will begin on our own beloved new Benton MacKaye Trail where it crosses Hwy. 68, and proceed northward several miles to Unicoi Gap. Then we will come down the new Unicoi Turnpike Trail that our association also helped build to a parking lot on Joe Brown Highway off 68. There will be a relatively short shuttle involved in this hike. Afterwards there will also be an opportunity to complete the day by driving up to Buck Bald for a tri-state view, including part of the route of the BMT across the area.

We will meet for breakfast at 8:00 a.m. at Hardees near Ducktown at the crossing of TN 68 and U.S. 64. We will leave Hardees no later than 8:40. If coming from the north on 68 and wishing to skip breakfast, you can also join us where the BMT crosses TN 68 north of the Hiwassee River by 9:00. **NO preregistration is required; just come!** For additional information, contact George Owen at Blairsville, (home) 706-374-4716 or (cell) 706-897-3366 or e-mail at [owenga@ellijay.com](mailto:owenga@ellijay.com).



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### 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.

**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](mailto:ristoms@hotmail.com)

**September 17 - Fun Hike** *See page 3 for details.*

**September 24 - Georgia Work Trip.** From Bushy Head Gap to Hudson Gap on beautiful, Section Eight. We will refresh some side-hilling, install some water diversions, and do some swing-blade work. Something for everyone! We meet at the East Ellijay (not Blue Ridge) Waffle King at 8:00 AM. Or meet at the Bushy Head Gap trailhead at 9:15 AM. Trip leader is Tony Oldfield, 770-939-7906, or [paco1784@bellsouth.net](mailto:paco1784@bellsouth.net).

**October 8 - Tennessee/North Carolina Work Trip / Carcamp / Backpack** -- The biggest problem with trying to do trail maintenance along the state line is that it takes so long to get there, not much time is left for getting things done. So we'll fix that by offering an overnight carcamp and/or backpack, depending on what volunteers want to do, in addition to the regular day-trip. Working mostly brush north out of Sandy Gap (All of this trail is open for adoption.), we'll try to get as far as we can. Fall colors will be out at these higher elevations (above 4000 ft). For information, or to lead this trip, contact Bill Ristom, [ristoms@hotmail.com](mailto:ristoms@hotmail.com), (423) 476-2945.

**October 22 - Georgia Work Trip. On Section Two, near to No Name Gap (aka Owen Gap)** We will do water diversions and refresh some side hilling and. Maybe some step-building. We meet at the East Ellijay (not Blue Ridge) Waffle King at 8:00 AM. Or meet at the Three Forks trailhead at 9:30 AM. Trip leader is Walt Cook, 706-549-5979, or [wcook@negia.net](mailto:wcook@negia.net).

**November 12 - Tennessee Work Trip on the lower Hiwassee.** Various odd chores need doing on the lower part of the John Muir Trail, from Childers Creek trailhead to Big Bend. (This section is maintained by the Cherokee Hiking Club.) Come join us for maintenance in the Autumn leaves on one of the prettiest sections of the BMT. To check on carpool arrangements or for details, contact trip leader Clayton Pannell, [crpannell@comcast.net](mailto:crpannell@comcast.net), (423) 263-9730 or Bill Ristom, [ristoms@hotmail.com](mailto:ristoms@hotmail.com), (423) 476-2945.

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