



Benton MacKaye Trail Association

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

WWW.BMTA.ORG

January, 2006

President's Column

As we begin 2006, I would like to reflect back over the highlights of 2005, our 25th Anniversary year:

12 February—the formal construction (22 miles of new trail in Phase II) of the BMT was concluded.

30 April—at the Southeastern Foot Trails Conference in South Carolina, the BMTA was presented the 2004 American Hiking Society's Trail Achievement Award for our perseverance in getting the trail route's final approval.

14-15 May—Dick Evans led a team of BMTA volunteers in putting route markers on trail junction signs along the BMT route in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

4 June—NATIONAL TRAIL DAY—at the dedication of the Unicoi Turnpike Trail (a spur trail off the BMT at Unicoi Gap near Coker Creek, Tennessee) the BMTA was presented a Certificate of Appreciation from the USDA Forest Service for our part in restoring a portion of the Unicoi Turnpike for hiking.

25 June—Founder's Day Hike—Tony Oldfield led 30 hikers who spent the day hiking and sharing history and special stories about the inception, and beginning phase of constructing the BMT.

16 July—Grand Opening and Dedication Ceremony—well over 100 folks were on hand to witness Construction Director Ken Jones and founding member George Owen lop the vine to officially open the BMT. After some inaugural hikes, we concluded the day with a delicious chili supper at Rattler Ford campground.

15 October—the 25th Anniversary dinner/annual meeting in Blue Ridge, Georgia. This event featured a look back at our history, as well as a look forward to the great opportunities in store for the organization.

6 December—the BMTA was presented with a second Certificate of Appreciation from the USDA Forest Service for our participation in the volunteer program in the Ocoee/Hiwassee Ranger District of the Cherokee National Forest.

I think you will agree with me that this has been a great year for the BMTA. I deeply appreciate all who have helped with, and supported the above events. We have come a long way from 1980, and have a proud history.

Steve Cartwright

News from the Ocoee River Gorge by Steve Cartwright

On **30 November**, I had the pleasure to participate in the dedication on new trail (part of the Tanasi trail system) linking the BMT with the Ocoee Whitewater Center (OWC). The

Rhododendron Trail begins just before you cross the bridge over the Ocoee River, at the power substation, and follows the river coming out at the picnic area just below the OWC. It is a very easy, gentle walk (handicap accessible), with a beautiful section of board walk that juts out over the river where you can pause and observe rafters and kayakers floating by. The trail eliminates the previous road walk between the guard rails on US 64. So, for those thru-hiking the trail, it serves as a more scenic route to get to the OWC which can serve as an information point and possible shuttle venue to the Copper Basin area. I was asked, and agreed, to give a brief talk on the importance of the trail to the BMT and the hiking community in general. Among those present for the dedication were: Hoyt Firestone, Polk County Mayor, Tom Speaks, CNF Forest Supervisor, and US Representative Zach Wamp (R), who procured funding for the trail...on **6 December** the BMTA was presented with a **Certificate of Appreciation from the USDA Forest Service for our participation in the "Volunteer Program"** coordinated by Trails Technician, Steve Biatowas for the Ocoee/Hiwassee Ranger District in the Cherokee National Forest. The Ocoee/Hiwassee RD "Volunteer Program" was recognized by the Regional Forester as an exemplary program in Region 8 (all National Forests in the southern states, including Puerto Rico). The certificate was awarded at a reception held at the OWC. President Steve Cartwright was on hand to accept the award from Forest Supervisor, Tom Speaks, along with the following members: Ken Jones, Robert Ownbey (who was also recognized individually), Betty Petty, Clayton Pannell, Bill and Diana Ristom. Many thanks to all who have worked on the trail in the Ocoee/Hiwassee Ranger District—your work has not gone unnoticed!

DECEMBER WORK TRIP IN GEORGIA

By: Walt Cook

Miracles do happen!! One happened on December 10, on Section One. Our work trip was planned for installing 24 new trail dips, four new water bars, 100 yards of tread restoration, plus cleaning all existing water bars. We would need at least 15 volunteers to accomplish all that, right? Wrong!! We did it all with FIVE people, and were back to the trailhead by 4:30 PM. Tom Keene, Doug Kleiber, Margaret Meadows, Tony Oldfield and Walt Cook got part of Section One into top condition for Tony and Margaret. They are the newly assigned maintainers on this long section, stretching 4.2 miles from Big Stamp Gap to Three Forks. As we entered the AT parking area on FS 42, we were treated to a spectacular nature show, with the morning sun shining brightly on the ice-encrusted tree crowns. Fortunately for us, most of the ice had fallen in the area we worked.

A footnote to this report -- As we were digging drainage dips, someone remarked about how nice it was to have sharp tools with which to work. We applaud the work of Tom (T.O.) Mitchell, our excellent and dedicated tool maintainer. It is easier to maintain a trail when we have maintained tools. Thanks, T.O., for a great job.

Total hours worked = 35. Total hours traveled = 20

Georgia Maintainer Hours*
between July 22 and December 1, 2005

Recorded by Tom Keene

Maintainer	Work	Travel	Total	Date
Blount, David	8	4	12	7/22/2005
	6	3	9	10/16/2005
Cook, Walt	3.5	2.5	6	8/2/2005
	6	4	10	10/14/2005
	6.5	5	11.5	10/19/2005
	6	4	10	11/1/2005
Dalton, Bruce	5	5	10	10/27/2005
	6	5	11	11/10/2005
	6	5	11	11/10/2005
Dalton, Andrea	6	5	11	11/10/2005
	2.5	2.5	5	8/12/2005
Dominy, Marty	2.5	2.5	5	8/12/2005
	3.5	4	7.5	10/29/2005
Douglas, Darcy	3.5	4	7.5	10/29/2005
	9	1	10	8/11/2005
Dumas, Larry	4.5	1	5.5	8/12/2005
	3	1	4	9/26/2005
	3	3	6	9/17/2005
Jones, Ken	3	3	6	9/17/2005
Hamrick, Bill	3	4	7	10/21/2005
	4	4	8	11/20/2005
	4.5	4	8.5	8/29/2005
Hill, Terry	4.5	4	8.5	8/29/2005
	2.5	0.5	3	10/15/2005
Keene, Jane	2.5	0.5	3	10/15/2005
	7	2	9	9/17/2005
Keene, Tom	2.5	0.5	3	10/15/2005
	6	1.5	7.5	10/14/2005
Kelsey, David	6.5	1	7.5	10/19/2005
	6	1.5	7.5	10/14/2005
Kelsey, Victoria	6.5	1	7.5	10/19/2005
	6	1.5	7.5	10/14/2005
	6.5	1	7.5	10/19/2005
Miller, Terry	10	2	12	7/23/2005
	10	2	12	7/30/2005
	10	2	12	8/6/2005
Mitchell, T.O.	4	2	6	8/27/2005
	3.5	7	10.5	9/4/2005
Oh, Changseon	2.5	9.5	12	9/11/2005
	2.5	9.5	12	9/11/2005
Owen, George				

Owenby, Robert	3.5	1	4.5	8/2/2005
Pullen, Mike	3	3	6	9/17/2005
Rice, Larry	5	4	9	9/10/2005
Ross, Bill	7	5	12	11/12/2005
Shubert, Bill	10	2	12	7/31/2005
Shubert, Mary Jon	3	3	6	9/17/2005
Shubert, Rhonda	1.5	6	7.5	8/6/2005
Smith, John	1.5	6	7	9/15/2005
Yoder, Del	3	6	9	11/17/2005
Shubert, Rhonda	10	2	12	7/23/2005
Smith, John	10	2	12	7/30/2005
Yoder, Del	10	2	12	8/6/2005
Shubert, Rhonda	4	6	10	11/20/2005
Shubert, Rhonda	4	0.5	4.5	7/30/2005

Guests:

Hamrick, Carolyn	3	4	7	10/21/2005
Korean Alpine Club				
7 members	24.5	49	73.5	9/4/2005
14 members	35	133	168	9/11/2005
Mitchell, Janice	0	2	2	8/27/2005
Peterson, Judith	3.5	4	7.5	10/29/2005
Pullen, Marc	5	3.5	8.5	9/10/2005
Rice, (fils)	7	4	11	11/12/2005
Smith, Nancy	10	2	12	7/31/2005
Smith, Nancy	6	4	10	11/1/2005

Totals 342.5 366.5 708

* Does not include work-trip hours.

MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR 2006

By Tony Oldfield

It is that time again! The dues for annual members became due on January 1, 2006. Please complete the form on page 3 and mail it with your check to the address shown on the form. The rates remain unchanged and are:

Student/Retired - \$15; Individual - \$20; Family - \$30; Corporate - \$50 and these may be converted to Life membership with payment of \$400.

Please consider adding a donation to your dues since our expenses continue to rise and we are a non profit organization.

Tennessee Work Trip, November 12
Clayton Pannell

On a clear frosty morning, ten workers showed up to do some serious reconstruction on the lower John Muir Trail. After a safety meeting in the parking lot at Big Bend, we hiked down the JMT about 0.8 mi toward Childers Creek to reach the work area near the rock step/overlook. The work consisted of filling two places that the river was washing out under the trail, and reconstruction of about 400 ft of badly eroded trail. At the end of the day, we had repaired most of the trail in the area of the rock steps but did no work on the steps themselves. After hiking back to the Big Bend picnic area, we installed the sign identifying the Cherokee Hiking Club as maintainers of this section of trail, then drove around to Childers Creek and installed the other sign there. Thanks to all who came out to work on the trail and a special thanks to Steve Biatowas and the Forest Service for the signs. A special thanks also to Kent and Pam Mathews who came all the way from Powell, TN (north of Knoxville) for their first work trip.

Workers were Ken Jones, Robert Owenby, Stephen Cartwright, Al Rymer, Bill Ristom, Linda Davis, Kent Mathews, Pam Mathews, Steve Biatowas, and Clayton Pannell; who together accumulated 58.5 work hours and 18.5 travel hours for a total of 77.0 hours, all reported to the Ocoee/Hiwassee District of the Cherokee National Forest.

Lost & Found: Woman's Blue Jacket

During October George Owen led or participated in hikes with three Georgia trail clubs (BMTA, GATC, MHH). Late in the month he discovered a nice blue fleece female jacket in his car trunk. If you are missing one from a trip with him, please e-mail or phone him at owenga@ellijay.com or 706-374-4716, further identify it, and he will return it.

Fine Winter Day At Garland Gap
By Tom Keene

November 19th started cold and blustery. But by the time we had hiked in from Dial Road to Garland Gap the sky had cleared and a bright sun cut the chill. The leaves were mostly off the trees and rustled noisily under foot. The views were splendid. From the ridge of Garland Mountain we could see the Toccoa River to the south and, with a ninety-degree turn of the head, Lake Blue Ridge to the north.

Larry Dumas lead the trip. He inherited this beautiful section (Brawley Mountain to Dial Road) from David Blount last spring. Already Larry's young son has favorite crooked tree to play on in the groove of white pines just in from Dial Road.

Larry wanted our help to refresh the side-hilling from Garland Gap up to the ridge line on Garland Mountain. Our party was only five. Happily, the topsoil was deep and the rocks and roots were few. We nearly, but not quite, got it all done.

Special thanks to Ryan Kleiber, a first-timer, and to Ken Jones, who drove down from Tennessee to lend a hand. Completing the party were T. O. Mitchell, who keeps our tools in such great shape, Larry Dumas, our leader, and your scribe. We walked out of the woods about 3:00pm, enjoying the views and the agreeable tiredness of a well-spent day in the woods.

NEW MEMBERS
By Tony Oldfield

Please welcome new members Craig Bowman, Sandi Still and Liz and Rick Struhar all of Decatur, GA, Steve and Carolyn Cook of Springfield, IL, Robert Dodrill of Orlando, FL, Jim Greenway of Fairmount, GA, Debbie Jackson of McDonough, GA, Rick and Chris Nehrling and family of Conyers, GA, Richard Park of Signal Mountain, TN, Nancy Smith of Athens, GA, Ameer Tavakoli of Atlanta, GA and James Wilson of Kingston, TN.

As of writing, our membership total stands at 235. During December we sent all members a copy of our member roster giving contact data.

2006 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL IS NOW DUE.
PLEASE REMIT PROMPTLY.

PLEASE COMPLETE:

INDIVIDUAL - \$20 LIFE MEMBER - \$400 STUDENT/RETIRED - \$15

FAMILY - \$30 CORPORATE - \$50 ADDITIONAL DONATION - \$ _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

PHONE (home) _____ (work) _____ email _____

Please mail this form and your check to:

BMTA
P.O. BOX 53271
ATLANTA, GA 30355-1271



Printed on re-cycled paper

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.

January 14 - Tennessee/North Carolina Work Trip Exact location not determined as of press time. Contact TN/NC Maintenance Director for an update, Bill Ristom, Ristoms@hotmail.com, 423-476-2945.

January 28 - Georgia Work Trip. On the Falls Branch section (Section Six). We will refresh some side-hilling, install some new water diversions and clean old ones. Meet at the East Ellijay (not Blue Ridge) Waffle King at 8:00 AM. Or meet at the Falls Branch Trailhead off Stanley Gap Road at 9:15 AM. .Trip leaders are Doug Kleiber 706-369-6655 (dkleiber@uga.edu) and Walt Cook, 706-549-5979 (wcook@negia.net).

February 11 - Tennessee/North Carolina Work Trip This work trip destination is open. Any section maintainers who would like a monthly work trip on their section in February, please contact Bill Ristom, Ristoms@hotmail.com, 423-476-2945. Watch for updates on the website and in the February newsletter.

February 25 Georgia Work-trip. Location TBA. For an update check the website's "Events Calendar" (<http://www.bmta.org/EventsCalendar.htm>) or call Tom Keene at 770-422-4838

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!

**Benton MacKaye Trail Association
P.O. Box 53271
Atlanta, Ga 30355-1271**

**NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MARIETTA, GA
PERMIT NO. 299**

DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE DO NOT HOLD

**BOB RUBY
RM05 (303)
680 N. ISLAND DRIVE
ATLANTA, GA 30327**

