



Newsletter of the

BENTON MACKAYE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

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Memberships are now due for **2009**. Our memberships are very nominal and help the association maintain the trail. The **costs** are Individual \$20, Family \$30, Student/Retired \$15 or Life \$400. Please mail your payment today. Thanks for your support.

Mark Your Calendar! 2009 Walk-thru on June 6

The 2009 BMT Walk-through is set for June 6, National Trails Day. So mark your calendar and line up a partner. Details to follow, in the newsletter and on the BMTA website.



At the table, starting left: His Excellency Ralph Heller, Jane Keene, Marge Heller, Bill Ross. Mona Street, Walt Cook, Darcy Douglas, Shirley Banks. And on the sofa, just awakened from a long winter's nap, Bob Ruby.

Rainy Day No Match for Work-trip and Blueberry Cobbler Birthday

By Tom Keene

Jan. 10, 2009 - The start was not auspicious. It was raining; more rain was predicted. Only Walt Cook and Ralph Heller joined the trip leader at breakfast. But others had promised to appear at the Sisson Pavilion. And so they did, despite the weather. Bill Ross was waiting when we arrived, and four more appeared shortly: Shirley Banks, Mona Street, Darcy Douglas and Bob Ruby.

From the pavilion we drove deep into the Sisson Cherrylog development. Except for a couple of light showers the rain held off. We got a lot done, removing blowdowns, refreshing side-hilling, adding cribbing, and water diversions at three different locations.

Our work done, we repaired to the Jane Keene's cabin for her veggie chowder and home-made bread, followed by blueberry cobbler and ice cream. It was a real treat. We were joined in the festivities by the new First Lady of the BMTA, Marge Heller.

And the birthday? Darcy's choir director talents were again on display, this time to serenade... Shirley Banks.

Happy Birthday to Shirley!

And thanks to all who joined in the chorus - and the work!



Bud Holloway Dies; Pink Pig Lives On

by George Owen

A friend of our club and trail, Bud Holloway, owner of the BMTA's favorite eating place the Pink Pig, passed away November 24 at his home in Cherry Log, Georgia after a

battle with cancer. Bud was 76.

Ever since the earliest days of the BMTA a quarter century ago, the Pink Pig in Cherry Log has been our destination after work trips and meetings. Most of our Georgia work trips end with a crowd gathering for barbecue dishes with garlic salad and one of those great berry cobblers topped with ice cream. Often over the years Bud Holloway was there to greet us and make us feel at home. Now we really miss him.

At the end of the 2008 BMTA walk-through we again gathered at the Pig, and two of our leaders were going to pick up the bill for everyone's dessert - several dozen dollars. When I walked up to the register to pay, Bud Holloway refused our money, saying he had just paid it for all our years of support. Wow! From the earliest days he also welcomed our brochures in the cherished box slots beside the exit door.

Bud and his wife Jacque purchased the restaurant in the 1970s and then expanded it. He has served on the Gilmer County School Board of Education and with the Cherry Log Community Organization. Three Georgia political notables found his restaurant one of their favorite places: President Jimmy Carter and former U.S. Senators Max Cleland and Zell Miller. In both the 1980s and 1990s the Pink Pig was chosen as one of the top ten Georgia barbecue restaurants.

In the earlier days of the BMTA, when our trail was having a hard time exiting Georgia and we were looking for a new logo on our shirts, one club wag suggested the front of our shirts bear the image of a mountain and crossed spoon and fork with the words "Benton MacKaye Trail - Springer Mountain to the Pink Pig." How appropriate!

However, the Pink Pig Restaurant with its tradition lives on. Bud's two daughters Melinda Hadden and Vicki Thompson have provided capital, advice, and much expertise, while his granddaughter Samantha "Sam" Callihan supervises the day-to-day operation of the dining establishment. In a local newspaper article "Sam" describes her fond memories how as a youngster she followed Bud around for years learning every aspect of the business. She loved to be with her granddaddy Bud, and became fascinated with the restaurant business ever since she was about six years old.

Ms. Callihan went into the restaurant business there some years ago to help out, but Bud felt she ought to try her hand at something else for security. So she entered real estate sales and did well. However, in a recent newspaper article she was quoted as saying that "I just wasn't happy. I missed the restaurant." So now "Sam" is back where she believes she belongs. You know something - we think so too. The Bud Holloway tradition of the warm, wonderful, old down-home Pink Pig with the winter fireplace a'going and the good food lives on in and through her - and we're glad!

GA Work Trip Report Feb. 14, 2009

by George Owen

This Georgia work trip was sparse in number, but tasks continued to get done.

Thus on February 14 only three of us, all men, gathered for the usual breakfast at the Village Restaurant in Blue Ridge at 8:00 a.m., and then drove the long haul to the gate parking point near the summit of Flat Top Mountain in the Cohuttas. We were joined at Dyer Gap by Bill Ross, bringing our team to four. Our task: to establish a campsite near the Halloway Gap spring and to refurbish the sidehill trail going uphill north of the gap.

Well, we finished clearing the new campsite by noon, ate lunch, then moved up to consider the sidehilling. While this writer attempted his first piece of sidehill improvement near the gap, a revolt was underway trailside just above him: the other three in low voices were talking and had become convinced this piece of trail was obvious and okay, and that what was really needed was to cut out some pieces of downed trees nearby that were partly blocking the BMT.

It did not take much to convince old George of the rightness of this alternative proposal. Thus the rest of our time was spent cutting out limbs and small trunks in the mile north of Halloway Gap. We departed the work after 2:00 p.m. to begin the two-mile old road walk off-trail back to our vehicles.

Attendees: *Eric Eades, Ralph Heller, George Owen, Bill Ross*

Work Hrs:22 Travel Hrs:10.5

TN/NC Work Trip Reports

Fodderstack/BMT Section 18a Trail Maintenance - Feb 20, 2009

by Ken Jones

We had another good day on Friday and finished clearing blowdowns from Fodderstack Trail. We went in from Beech Gap to Cold Springs Gap and cleared 2 blowdowns with the chainsaw to get through. At Cold Springs Gap we stowed the chainsaw and got out the crosscut saws and axes. We hiked from there to Harrison Gap, then turned around and started clearing blowdowns on the way back to the vehicles. We cleared a total of 18 more trees on the way back, finishing clearing Fodderstack Trail of blowdowns in 3 work trips. The total amount of blowdowns cleared from the 13.2-mile trail in 3 trips was 50 trees.

We met a BMT thru-hiker in between Glenn Gap and Cherry Log Gap as we worked our way back. He was very appreciative of our maintenance effort and said that he had really enjoyed the trail. The GPS data for the day revealed that we hiked 10.6 miles and climbed 2400 feet in total elevation gain. The temperature for the day never made it above freezing, but the work crew was only really cold for the first 30 minutes of the morning.



Attendees: Ken Jones, Tazz Reid, Ed Ley, John Kalabus
Work Hours: 32 **Travel Hours:** 42.5

BMT Trail Maintenance - Section 15c Jan 9, 2009

by Rick Harris

Rick Harris, Brenda Harris, Liz Carter and Butch Horn logged the entire 2.0 miles of the Benton MacKaye Trail from Sandy Gap to Six-Mile Gap today and also brushed out the first 1.3 miles from Sandy Gap toward Six Mile Gap on this crystal clear crisp day. Our count is that we logged out 28 trees across the trail. A few of the logs were over 12 inches in diameter, and one larger one was about 18 inches in diameter. The trail should now be considered in excellent condition. Butch and Liz plan to go back in the near future to finish off the brushing out the rest of the way to Six Mile Gap. They are the assigned maintainers for this section of the trail.

Work Hours: 16

Travel Hours: 6

TN/NC Work Trip Report January 24, 2009

by Rick Harris

Eight volunteers worked on section 12d of the BMT today. It started out cloudy with sprinkles, but the weather quickly cleared and the day remained sunny till the end. Rick Harris and Ken Jones completely logged out the trail from McFarland Road to White Oak Flats Road at Lost Creek Campground, clearing 12 large logs and several smaller logs with a chainsaw. The others used gas-powered brushcutters to clear the trail of smaller stuff.

Volunteers included Rick Harris, Ken Jones, George Owen, Tom Keene, Steve Biatowas, Jim Lumpkin, Josh Noe and Marty Dominy.

Thanks to Bill Lundin, who scouted out the work to be done the week before, the trip was efficient and successful.

TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS: 71 hours + 8 hours by Bill Lundin on January 14, 2009.

GRAND TOTAL 79 hours

Save this Date!

The Southeastern Foot Trails Coalition (SEFTC) is planning a conference May 7-10 at Pine Mountain State Resort Park in Pineville, KY. This will be the 5th conference of its kind, and they are always good hikes, educational sessions, and camaraderie. For more information about the conference please contact Dennis Crowley at dennis.crowley@win.net.



Dalton State College Trail

By Eric Eades

For the last two years, volunteer trail builders have been working diligently to build trails on the ridge overlooking the campus...and it has a BMTA connection! Trail layout experts Walt Cook and George Owen laid out the trails in the Fall of 2007, and local resident (and student) Eric Eades, has helped supervise construction. All are BMTA members. The trail system is being constructed to AT/BMTA standards. None of the student, faculty, and local volunteers had any trail building experience, but now many can sidehill with the best!

The trails consist of two loops coming off of a single trail lead. The north loop features two creek crossings and a rhododendron tunnel. The south loop will track higher onto the ridge, and eventually lead back to George Rice Drive, near the trailhead. Work days commence when school goes into fall semester, alternating Fridays and Saturdays, once or twice a month. There is a summer break from trail building activities. The north loop is just about half completed, and will be approximately 2 miles in length. Hopefully, in three or four years the entire project will be complete.

BMT (GA) Spring Flowers Dayhike: Falls Branch and Rich Mountain Cove

Saturday 18 April 2009

Rating: Moderate

Distance: 5-6 miles

Leaders: Tom and Jane Keene

Max # hikers: 10

We will meet at 10am near Blue Ridge, then carpool to the Stanley Gap trailhead, arriving about 10:30am. Then we hike into the Rich Mountain Wilderness and down a beautiful cove, winding up at the Falls Branch Falls on BMT Section Six for lunch.

After a leisurely lunch by the falls we continue on BMT Section Six to the junction with the Stanley Gap trail and then down to the trailhead parking.

To reserve a spot in this award-winning hike, call 770-422-4838, or (after 3pm Friday the day before) 770-722-6016.

Upcoming GA Work Trips

March 14 – Side-hill improvement and other finishing work on the Wallalah-Licklog Reroute on Section Three.

Meet at the Village Restaurant in Blue Ridge at 8:00 AM. Or meet at the trailhead, GA Hwy. 60 and Little Skeenah Creek, at 9:10 AM.

Trip leaders are George Owen, 706-374-4716; or Tom Keene, 770-422-4838, or, the night before only, 770-722-6016.

Upcoming TN/NC Work Trips

Saturday and Sunday, March 28-29

BMT Section 16a - Sandy Gap to Roundtop. We will remark sections of the 3.5 mile long section of trail in the Heart of Darkness and then log and brush out the trail over this two day worktrip which is a combined worktrip of the TN/NC and the GA work crews. This is an area on a ridgeline mostly on the TN/NC state line which is desperately in need of maintenance. We will spend the night at Liz Carter and Butch Horn's home on Appalachia Lake, just a few miles from Sandy Gap. Supper and breakfast will be provided. When we run out of beds, we will use sleeping bags on their floor. So bring a sleeping bag and pad, just in case.

MEETING LOCATION: We will meet at Sandy Gap about 9AM on both Saturday and Sunday.

LEADER: Rick Harris, 423-253-6358 (home); 513-260-1184 (cell), HarrisRi@aol.com

April 25

BMT Section 19c - US 129 at Deals Gap to Topoca Trailhead at the Little Tennessee River. This 5.1 mile section of trail needs much maintenance, but thankfully about half of it is on a gravel road through the Alcoa property and won't need any maintenance.

MEETING LOCATION: We will meet at US 129 crossing down in the Cheoah Dam Upper Parking Lot by the Little Tennessee River at 9AM.

LEADER: Rick Harris, 423-253-6358 (home); 513-260-1184 (cell), HarrisRi@aol.com.



President's Corner

by Ralph Heller

With the economy in the doldrums, membership in the Benton MacKaye Trail Association is one of the best deals to be found. For little more than it costs a family of four to go to the movies one time, not including the obligatory refreshments, one can have a full year's family membership to one of the best trail organizations in the southeastern United States. Membership privileges include this newsletter, two monthly trail maintenance work trips, fun hikes, backpack trips, merchandise discounts and the chance to learn from some of the most trail-smart individuals you will ever meet. Whether you are new to hiking, new to the southern Appalachians or an experienced hiker, you can pick up a wealth of information on not only our trail but trails throughout the South. Our members have varying backgrounds including a retired forestry professor, history professor, nuclear engineer, medical doctor, and college student, and many of know these mountains like the back of their hands. One member even guides hiking tours during the summer for a month in the Swiss Alps. What they all have in common is the love of the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT) and hiking outdoors in the beautiful mountain forests so near to their homes in Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee.

Due to job security pressure and financial difficulty, many people are curtailing vacation plans that include far travel destinations. A new word, staycation, has now been introduced. The single day or weekend retreat is ever more popular in these difficult times. People need some time away from the stress of work and making ends meet. What better stress reliever is there than spending the day on the BMT enjoying fresh air and spectacular mountain scenes with good company? Get off your treadmills and have some productive exercise! So, if you are not a member, join the BMTA. If you are a member, network with other members or have friends join the BMTA. Then, save travel expense by riding together to one of our events. Sign up for one of our maintenance trips and have a great day or weekend in the mountains, or arrange to adopt a section of the trail as a section maintainer. Go to WWW.bmta.org for more information on the BMT and to learn about open sections that need maintainers. We especially need more maintainers for the sections in the new part of our trail along the border of North Carolina and Tennessee up to the Smokies. Information on upcoming activities is found in this newsletter or on the web site. We hope to see you soon.

BMTA Membership/Donation Form

Please enter this Benton MacKaye Trail Assn membership/renewal:

Individual, 1 Yr. \$20 Family, 1 Yr. \$30 Student/Retired, 1 Yr. \$15

Corporate, 1 Yr. \$50 Life Membership \$400

Name(s) Same Info. Zip

Address State City Telephone (1st) Telephone (2nd) Do not call eMail

Please don't list my contact info in the annual membership roster.

It's OK to share my contact info with sister trail organizations.

Interested in helping with: Trail Work Fun Hikes Mgmt/Officer

Administrative Newsletter Adopting a Section of Trail

I wish to make a tax-deductible donation in the amount of \$

Gift Membership given by: name eMail address/phone

Mail to: Benton MacKaye Trail Assn ♦ PO Box 53271 ♦ Atlanta, GA 30355-1271

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING - Jan. 3

Minutes by Margaret Meadows - abstracted by the Editor

There were 16 board members present for this meeting graciously hosted by the Hellers in their home. The minutes from the previous meeting were approved, the Treasurer's report was submitted and approved. The Corridor Protection Committee reported on the discussions about trail relocation in troublesome areas but nothing has been finalized yet. Terry Miller reported on the current status of the web site. Other discussions were on the Smokies 75th anniversary, the rewrite of the Data Book, and maintenance in the Smokies. There were some verbiage changes suggested for the by-laws but the board felt that these could wait until later. Dick Evans was appointed as the alternate SEFTC contact. Our primary contact is Jeff Hunter. National Scenic Trail Designation was discussed, and a committee consisting of Darcy Douglas, Rick Harris and Denny Rhodes was appointed for further study. A long-term planning committee was formed consisting of Liz Carter and Dick Evans. A new distribution list for handling email inquiries was established. A committee consisting of George Owen, Darcy Douglas, and Nancy Shofner is putting together a thirty-year history of the BMT. Denny Rhodes reported on current conservation issues and his method of handling them. Dates were set for future work trips, the annual walk-thru, future board meetings and Bob Ruby asked for more volunteers to lead hikes.



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Monty Simmons, Elaine Wolf, Kim O'Leary, Betty Petty, Don Bodley, Bob Fanning, Sarah Frost, Tom Tomisek, Carole Crider. Kneeling: Kendra Cross, Donald Box

Buck Bald Moonlight Hike
Sunday, February 8, 2009
 by Betty Petty

Despite several last minute cancellations due to illness and personal reasons, ten of us departed Ooltewah for Coker Creek as planned. When we arrived at the FS road to Buck Bald to set up the shuttle end, we discovered that the road was extremely muddy. We decided to leave our

vehicles at the BMT crossing on this road. Elizabeth Carter met us at this intersection and helped us with our shuttle even though she could not hike with us due to her husband's illness. When we arrived at Joe Brown Highway we discovered it was equally muddy. Due to the parking situation there, we parked at the new CCC camp access where Don Bodley was waiting for us.

We did the access trail down to the old CCC camp and then followed the still-existing sections of the Unicoi Turnpike up to the BMT crossing at Unicoi Gap. We then hiked the section of the BMT back to the Buck Bald access road. Because the access road was so muddy, we drove up to Buck Bald. Everyone was able to make it up, even though we almost lost a couple of cars in the mud! However, we were able to view a gorgeous sunset with a 360-degree view across the Cherokee Nation Forest while eating our supper. The full moon was also rising at this time, but remained hidden behind some clouds.

Historic Note: *The path now known at the Unicoi Turnpike predates written history. It was originally an Indian (Cherokee) path connecting the Overhill towns with the Lower towns in South Carolina. The first white people in Tennessee were traders who came up this path. Unicoi Gap is one of the lowest gaps in the southern Appalachians.*

This edition of the BMTA Newsletter, compiled and edited by Betty Petty, is printed on 100% recycled paper.