

Newsletter of the

Benton MacKaye Trail Association, Inc.

PO Box 6

Cherry Log, GA

Volume 29, Issue 1

February, 2011

**General Information
and Schedule**

“Leaving a footpath for generations to follow.”



February Activities

If you would like to join us on any of these activities, please contact the Trip Leader, as there may be group size or other constraints. For the email addresses, to combat SPAM, just substitute the character “@” for the “at” and a dot for the “dot”.

Due to frequent inclement weather in February, last minute cancellations will be posted on our Facebook page, and Trip Leaders will contact those who have signed up.

February 5th – Fun Hike. Wayah Gap to Siler Bald, NC. 4 Miles. Difficult Rating.
Trip Leader – George Owen. Email: gowen2 “at” tds “dot” net. 706-374-4716.

February 12th – Georgia Work Trip – Location Pending.
Trip Leader – Ralph Heller. Email: [rshatl“at”etcmil“dot”com](mailto:rshatl@etcmil.com). 770-235-9760.

February 19th – Fun Hike. Toccoa Suspension Bridge, GA. 7.2 Miles. Difficult Rating.
Trip Leader – Wes Clounts. Email: regina “at” reginaclounts “dot” com. 706-769-3234.

February 26th – Tennessee / North Carolina Work Trip. Location Pending.
Trip Leader – Rick Harris. Email: HarrisRi “at” aol “dot” com. 513-260-1184.

March Activities

March 5th – Fun Hike. Mt. Yonah, GA. 4 Miles. Difficult Rating.
Trip Leader – Darcy Douglas. Email: bmtadarcy “at” yahoo “dot” com. 404-497-0818.

March 5th – 9 AM. BMTA Presentation at **Amicalola Falls State Park Lodge**.

March 12th – Board of Directors Meeting. 9 AM. Ralph and Marge Heller's House.
All Members welcome. Contact: Dick Evans -via the Contact Us Page on Website. Directions to follow.

March 19th – Fun Hike. Lake Winfield Scott area. 6 Miles. Average Rating.
Trip Leader – Shirley Banks. Email: shirleymaybanks “at” gmail “dot” com. 404-644-4861.

March 19th - BMTA Presentation and Display at **Spring on Springer - AT Trail Fest**, Dahlonega. For more info, see: www.dahlongatrailfest.org,

March 26th – Tennessee / North Carolina Work Trip. Details to be announced.
Trip Leader – Rick Harris. Email: HarrisRi “at” aol “dot” com. 513-260-1184.

New Members – We want to welcome the following New Members to the BMTA:

| Name | Hometown | Joined |
|-----------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Joyce linard Breland | Walterboro, SC | November |
| Susan Basch | Mineral Bluff, GA | November |
| Edward Muller | Atlanta, GA | November |
| Greg & Virginia Lane | Blairsville, GA | November |
| Martha Quijano | Turtletown, TN | November |
| Kim Hainge | Robbinsville, NC | November |
| Carol Collier | Venice, FL | November |
| Walt & Kate George | Blue Ridge, GA | December |
| Tazz Reid | Reliance, TN | December |
| Vernon & Ginny Smith | Mineral Bluff, GA | December |
| Verlon Maize | Murphy, NC | December |
| Harold Roll | Hiwassee, GA | December |
| David Martin | Douglasville, GA | December |
| Frank Maloney | Blairsville, GA | December |
| Robt & Effaleda Lee | Niota, TN | December |
| Keith Karnok | Walkinsville, GA | December |
| Scott Glenn | Cornelia, GA | December |
| Ken Cissua | Ellijay, GA | December |
| Richbow erman | Hendersonville, NC | December |
| Kevin O'Quinn | Blue Ridge, GA | January |
| Vonny Blanton | Rome, GA | January |
| Tom Swoger | Roswell, GA | January |
| Lynn Seeger | Red Bank, TN | January |
| June Tyler | Blairsville, GA | January |
| Bill Goodman | Atlanta, GA | January |
| Carlos & Carol Martel | Mineral Bluff, GA | January |
| Jim Oliver | McDonough, GA | January |
| Peter Tokarczyk | Radford, VA | January |
| Michael Wall | Atlanta, GA | January |
| Zoe Zardis | Lexington, TN | January |

“Armchair” Activities for BMTA by Liz Carter

When he was in his 90's my grandfather confessed that he was “slowing down some”. In the last year I have to admit that I am “slowing down some” too. Looking around the room at the Annual Meeting I suspect that I am not the only one. There are a few of us who can't carry a backpack not to mention a chain saw, but we are lucky that the BMTA has lots of needs. Not all of these can be done from an armchair but they don't require a lot of physical effort. Here are some ways you can help “while slowing down”.

1. “Man” (or “woman”) a BMTA exhibit at a festival, fair, or community event. You can take your armchair with you and sit and visit with folks all day. Contact Ralph or Marge Heller for details.
2. Run a shuttle for a work crew. Sit in your comfy vehicle driving beautiful mountain roads while you save the crew hours of time. Check the webpage or newsletter for upcoming trail maintenance events. If there is one in your area, call the leader to see if you can help.
3. Get publicity for the Association and the Trails. Be alert for opportunities to promote the BMTA through local media and events. Volunteer to take the video presentation to civic clubs and outfitters. Contact the Heller's for more information.
4. Help distribute BMTA publications and materials. Ask businesses in your area if they want to carry BMTA guidebooks or display free brochures. Contact any BMTA officer or board member.
5. Volunteer to help with planning for BMTA hikes and events. Scout out good places to eat after hikes or sites for annual meetings. Host a gathering in your home if you are near a trail. Contact Pam Sullivan or any officer or board member.

+++++

SAVE THE DATE – JULY 30TH, 2011!!!! by Dick Evans

Most of us remember memorizing the poem, "Trees", by Joyce Kilmer in school, if we can remember that long ago, and some of us know that the poet was male, despite the first name. Others know that the Benton MacKaye Trail goes thru the "Joyce Kilmer – Slickrock Wilderness" on the Tennessee / North Carolina border, but now, as a famous radio pundit put it, here is the "rest of the story".

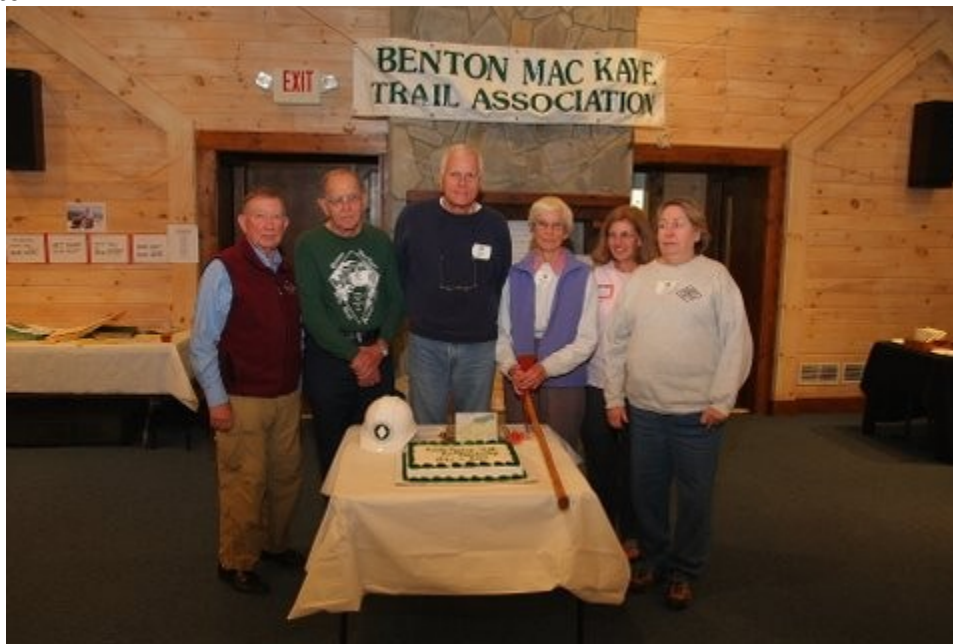
Joyce Kilmer wrote many other poems, although his etherial "Trees" struck a nerve in the United States and indeed around the world. It was (and is) a poignant essay, especially for one so young. Kilmer was killed near the end of World War I while on a scouting mission in France. In the early 1930's, what was then the Bozeman Bulgar Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars started a campaign to have a forest area designated in memorial to this patriot. Congressional action followed, and the Chief of the US Forest Service, after extensive review of suggested areas, chose an area of virgin timber in a little-known county of Graham, in western North Carolina, to be dedicated to Kilmer and his poem, "...until time shall be no more." The dedication was held on July 30th, 1936.

Thanks to the mathematical abilities of Deputy District Ranger Lauren Stull of the Tusquittee/Cheoah Ranger District of the US Forest Service, there will be a rededication ceremony on the 75th Anniversary of that event this coming July 30th. Various activities are planned for the Rattler Ford area of the Joyce Kilmer – Slickrock Wilderness for that entire day, including road races, exhibitions of traditional forestry methods, stewardship instruction and a formal rededication by a joint VFW/American Legion Team of veterans. This promises to be a memorable event, and everyone is invited. Put it on your calendar now! The web site, www.joycekilmerslickrock.org will have details as the date nears. In the interest of full disclosure, I am on the planning committee for the event, as well as being a Director of the Partners of the Joyce Kilmer – Slickrock Wilderness, Inc., sponsoring the event.

Trail News.

The trail was mentioned 3 times in an article in the Ellijay **Times-Courier**, 1/20/11 and includes a photo of the Toccoa River suspension bridge. The story's focus is on Travis Crouch, Owner of North Georgia Mountain Outfitters in Ellijay, GA., who is a Corporate Sponsor of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association. (Please keep this fine store in mind when you are shopping for spring hiking gear. Yes, there will be a spring (eventually).

Founders Photo



Founders Photo taken at the 2010 Annual Meeting.
Left to right, George Owen, Walt Cook, Dave Sherman, Nancy Shofner, Darcy Douglas and Claire Broadwell.



Appalachian Trail Celebration & Backpacking Clinic

Once again, Amicalola Falls State Park Lodge is hosting the annual Appalachian Trail Celebration & Backpacking Clinic, March 4 – 6. Enjoy demonstrations by professionals and retailers on an assortment of backpacking gear. Hear about hiking adventures past and present. Please visit the BMTA booth and attend our power point presentation on the Benton MacKaye Trail, Saturday, March 5, 9am. For more information, call: (706) 265-1969.

Annual Meeting Photos.



Incoming Board of Directors for 2011.

George Owen, Butch Horn, Pam Sullivan, Marge Heller, Ken Jones, David Blount, Margaret Meadows, Dick Evans, Vic Fredlund, Rick Harris, Shirley Banks.



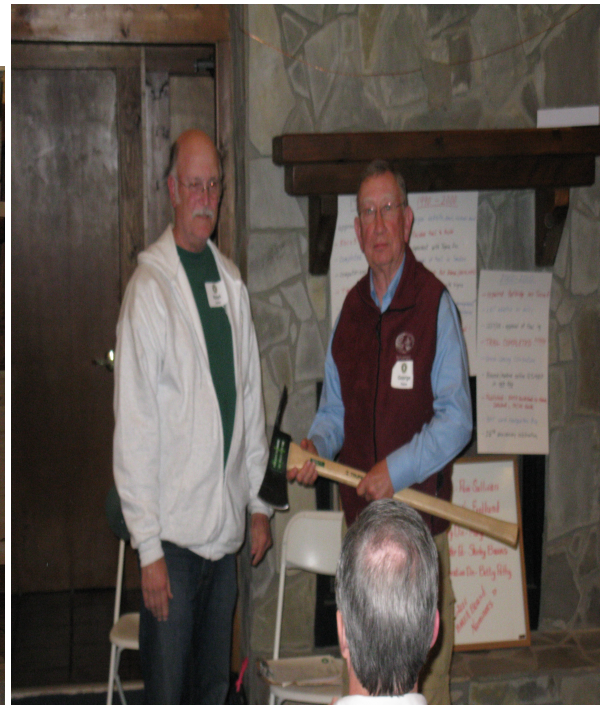
Bluegrass music accompanied the meal.



Tom Speaks, Forest Supervisor, Cherokee National Forest, gave a lively and well received talk.



Dick Evans and Ralph Heller presented Appreciation Plaques to all our Land owners. Pictured are Park Ranger / Backcountry Operations Specialist Melissa Cobern and Ranger Christine Hoyer, both from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.



George Owen received the "Maintainer of the Year" Award.

30th Anniversary Celebration Cake and the Maintainer of the Year Pulaski.



Ken Jones receiving the Tennessee Trail Worker Award at National Trails Symposium .



In addition to the award received by Ken Jones as the Tennessee Trail Worker Award, Tennessee was well represented among other awards, including the following:

Phil Bredesen, Governor of Tennessee, received the very prestigious "Outstanding Service Award". During his eight years of office, he tirelessly supported the state park system and was instrumental in protecting over 650,000 acres of Tennessee land from development by purchase or lease by the state. The state parks system earned the distinction of becoming the best park system in the USA and the TDEC magazine *The Tennessee Conservationist* was recognized as the best such publication in the country. Under his guidance, the TN Greenways & Trails Commission was recognized as the best such program in the country. He also is actively working to protect the Cumberland Plateau from any further mountain top removal.

Bob Richards, as the TN Greenways & Trails Commission Coordinator, won the "State Trail Advocacy Award".

SORBA (Southern Off-Road Bicycle Assn) and the TVA received the "Partnership Award" for the joint development of the Raccoon Mountain Bicycle Trails near Chattanooga.

Bob Fulcher, Park Director of the Cumberland Trail State Park, won the "Outstanding Media Award" for the weekly radio show he does on a radio station in Knoxville where he spotlights musicians and unique people of the Cumberland Plateau.

The City of Chattanooga won the "Planning/Design Award" for the development of the Tennessee Riverpark.

The Lyndhurst Foundation of Chattanooga won the "Corporate Award" for their continuous and generous support of the trail system in Chattanooga.

Devoted BMT Maintainer Bill Shubert Dies By George Owen

Soft-spoken, humorous Bill Shubert died November 26 at age 82 in Hartwell, Georgia after several years of illness. He and his wife Mary Jon were outstanding maintainers of two Georgia Benton MacKaye Trail sections, 05b – Ledford Gap to Brawley Mountain, and then subsequently 05d – Dial Road to Shallowford Bridge.

Tom Keene noted that when he was GA trail supervisor that in just the first half of 2005 Bill and Mary Jon recorded over a quarter of all hours worked on the BMT in the Peach State. Tom further reported that for three years Bill Shubert had the largest number of reported work/travel hours in the BMTA. He also received the "Golden Pulaski" as the "Maintainer of the Year" in 2003. In addition, one of the Shubert children, Rhonda, along with her husband Terry, maintained section 08e, Fowler Mountain to Hallway Gap.

David Blount had another memory of him, how Bill "helped me maintain the top of my old section on the west side of

Brawley...I don't think I ever heard an unkind word out of Bill." Bill and Mary Jon loved the fellowship of the club, such as our annual meeting events.

Born in Pratt, Alabama, he served in the Korean War as a Marine and retired subsequently from the Air Force. He entered public education in Georgia after his military career, and was eventually Director of Special Education in Gwinnett County.

He also loved to hike, having trekked the length of the Bartram Trail and the Georgia section of both the Benton MacKaye and Appalachian trails. He was part of the Highpointers Club, and bagged many high points. He so enjoyed hiking that his trail name was "Walking Willie."

Bill's memorial service was held December 1 at Hartwell First United Methodist Church. He is survived by four children, three sons and daughter Rhonda. Donations in his memory may be made to the BMTA or to Hart County Habitat for Humanity.

The many of us who knew Bill will certainly miss him. More than one person commented on his "gentle humor." The BMTA has certain lost one of its best maintainers and most faithful members!

Winter's Challenges – by Dick Evans



Hiking in winter presents some unusual issues, and those we tend to expect and plan for, resulting in a great trip. Not so anticipated is the effect that a severe winter can have on our daily activities, and that was the case with the Benton MacKaye Trail Association this winter. We had our Annual Meeting in early November, and that seemed to be the start of a series of weather-related delays and obstacles to the smooth running of the BMTA. We elected a new Treasurer, but due to schedules and weather, it was more than a month before we could all get together and get accounts signed over and records reviewed. This resulted in a delay in getting End of Year Membership Renewal Notices out, and created a few cases where we sent renewal notes to folks who had actually paid. I apologize for those, thankfully they were few, but I ended up getting an erroneous note myself. We hope that next year, we can do a personalized email to everyone about renewals, as we have some folks who actually are paid in advance. Another challenge was in preparation and distribution of the Electronic Newsletter. As most of you realized, we missed the January Issue, due to a number of weather and personnel issues. This issue, while not as graphically "pleasing" as the first issue, nevertheless gets the information into the hands of the members. We really do intend to get this out at the end of each month.

In addition, for weather related reasons, we had to cancel a couple of Board Meetings and a Fun Hike, and the work trips are dependent on the weather. We have found that it is very easy to put a cancellation note on our Facebook page, and not as easy to get a timely notice on the website, so, especially during periods of inclement weather, check our Facebook page for last minute changes.

Each E-Newsletter should have the activities for the next couple months listed, but we will have the full annual schedule on the Web Site on the Activities Page for longer range coordination. The purpose is to make sure that the entire membership knows what is going on in their Association, so I would love to hear any suggestions in this regard.

Given all winter's challenges, however, it does have it's benefits. Take a few minutes after a fresh snowfall, go outside and just look and listen. It really is a whole new world. We found tracks of a small animal, probably a mouse or vole, going halfway across the driveway, then stopping in a bunch of disturbed snow, probably as an owl or hawk found a meal. Those types of things are part of our (and their) daily life, but winter gives us a chance to observe it. As MacKaye said, part of the reason for hiking is "...to see, and to see what you have seen." Winter gives us that opportunity.

Dick Evans
President, BMTA, Inc.