

Georgia Work Trip, February 12

Ralph Heller

Saturday, Feb. 12 finally gave us nice a break in the weather. That beautiful morning, ten of us met for breakfast at L&A Corner across from the Pink Pig Restaurant. After breakfast we proceeded to the end of County Road 158 east of Highway 515 where the BMT crosses the highway. The BMT follows 158 for a short way east of 515 to where it is no longer maintained, through to Laurel Ridge Road. This short non maintained section of road, about .25 miles, has become a dumping area for trash and construction debris. The team worked diligently through the morning picking up trash and continued up Laurel Ridge Road. We managed to fully load a vintage Chevy pickup truck bed and an 8 by 10 trailer, loaned to us by a friend of the BMTA, Dave Cherry. Also assisting us was David King, hiker friendly owner of the property at the end of County Road 158. Mr. King is the new owner of the property where we used to have the problem with vicious dogs. David used his tractor to pull up some of the partially buried trash from the creek bed



They thought they were going for a hayride and ice cream...

Photo by Ralph Heller

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Georgia Work Trip, February 12, continued



...but they had to work hard before they got the ice cream!
Photo by Martha Paye

This section of the BMT on Section 07A on the old road bed along a creek is now a pleasant walk with the eyesore trash removed.



Above: It is doubtful that a hiker left this trash.
Photo by Marge Heller

Right: We couldn't quite pack it all out, so friends of the BMTA helped out.
Photo by Larry Dumas

along the abandoned section of roadbed that the trail follows. Special thanks also to Jim Sellers of Gilmer County Landfill Department who gave us permission of dispose of the trash without charge at the Gilmer landfill site.

This section of the BMT on Section 07A on the old road bed along a creek is now a pleasant walk with the eyesore trash removed. Some of the trash had been there a long time. We plan to put up barriers to prevent vehicles from driving and dumping on this section.

After a job well done, most of the group refreshed themselves with a delicious meal at the Pink Pig. As a special treat, Ralph Heller bought cobbler and ice cream for everyone who wanted dessert.

Work started at 9:30 and finished at 1:30. Total travel time was 16.6 hours. Darcy Douglas and Terry Miller went out after lunch and painted blazes along the section just worked for 3 more hours. Total work time was 56.5 hours. Work participants were Walt George, Bill Hamrick, Terry Miller, Mike Christison, Tom Mitchell, Larry and Alex Dumas, Darcy Douglas, Ralph Heller, and Josh Chastain, and first time participants Curtiss Paye, Martha Paye and



President's Column**My Side of the Campfire**

I may be crazy, but I love March! I know that it is still winter in most areas, but I look forward to breaking out the camping gear, airing the tent, checking the stove, re-waterproofing the pack, all those things that, at least in my mind, mean, great weather is just around the corner. To me, it's the "real" start of the new year. I dig out the maps and guidebooks, call or email friends and set up trips, see which groups are going where, check my section of the Trail for maintenance needs, and in general, plan what I would like to do the rest of the year. May not get it all done, but I start with a plan and see how far I get. Life is a journey, not a destination. As the song says, ..."It's the Climb." The early wildflowers and buds are a reaffirmation that winter didn't defeat us, we are still here and ready for more.

In March, we have two great fun hikes going, Mount Yonah on the 5th and Lake Winfield Scott on the 19th. Please try to make at least one of them. Also, at the end of March, we have a work trip in the Tennessee/ North Carolina area. Details are still pending, but we'll send out an email later. We had to cancel the Georgia work trip for March due to the Board Meeting on March 12. Because of weather delays and cancellations, this will be the first Board meeting of 2011. Lots of items are on the agenda. Hopefully, later Board meetings can be shorter and possibly scheduled after a fun hike.

Since right now, the snow is off the ground, this is an excellent time for section maintainers to hike their section and get an idea of the maintenance needs for it. Let the state maintenance director know the condition. If you anticipate needing help with regular maintenance, they will try to get things on the schedule. Remember, we can easily schedule "mini work trips" during the week, and sometimes, you get more help that way. With the advent of the email information distribution, it is easy to send the information out. We are trying to limit "official" emails, like the Newsletter, to a maximum of three a month, but we can add a "mini-trip" in one of those notices easily. The important thing, as MacKaye put it, is "To walk. To see. To see what you see." If your section is overwhelming, we have the people and know-how to ease that burden. Just let us know. It takes teamwork to make the dream work, and the Benton MacKaye Trail Association is a great team!

Dick

The early wildflowers and buds are a reaffirmation that winter didn't defeat us. We are still here and ready for more.

BMTA Board Members Mark Coordinates on the BMT section in Cherry Log

Pam Sullivan

A small group of BMTA board members hiked through the Sisson property on the BMT in late January to obtain GPS coordinates. This pretty trail is an unexpected treasure as it winds through a residential area in Cherry Log. Sparkling streams, hemlock coves, covered bridges and the BMT's only shelter are located here. The photo is of a tiny church located on a pond - open the door to see beautiful stained glass windows of the forest.

A slideshow is posted on YouTube (turn up the sound): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-jyX2SYW4A>

Sparkling streams, hemlock coves, covered bridges and the BMT's only shelter are featured on the Cherry Log section of the BMT.



Left: George Owen at the Cherry Log chapel

Photo by Pam Sullivan

Trail Improvements Pending on South Fork Trail

George Owen

Larry Thomas, Acting Dispersed Recreation Program Manager for the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests, informs us that survey flags have been positioned along the South Fork Trail, which includes about one-and-a-half miles of BMT, in low, wet parts of the trail. The BTA is in favor of the work being done on that part of the trail, which we share with equestrians. Please leave these orange flags and other improvement indicators alone. At some point after all government paperwork is done that section may be blocked for some days while improvements are made. The BMTA has asked that we be notified of such dates if possible in advance.

BMTA (and other) Events for March 2011

Join a hike! Come to a meeting! Work on the trail!

March 5, Day Hike: Mt. Yonah, Cleveland, GA., (4 Miles/Difficult) This interesting shark-fin shaped mountain stands alone and can be spotted all over this area of the north GA. mountains. Hikers literally "climb a mountain" on this short hike and the views along the way are spectacular. Mt. Yonah is also known for a site for military maneuvers. Expect to see some early wildflowers. Optional meal out after at the locals' favorite, Mama Gootch's in Cleveland. Contact Person: Darcy Douglas, email bmtadarcy@yahoo.com or call [\(404\) 497-0818](tel:404-497-0818).

March 11, Joint BMTA-Federal Agency Partner Land Managers Meeting: Annual coordinating meeting to discuss issues of trail-wide import. Open to visitors, but agenda is controlled. For more information, email President@BMTA.org for details.

March 12, BMTA Board of Directors Meeting: Starts at 9 AM at Ralph Heller's home in Cherry Log. Lunch to be provided, details to follow to BOD Members. Budget and new Guidebook are major topics of discussion. Open to Members. For more information, email President@BMTA.org for details.

March 12, Tellico River Cleanup: Registration begins at 8:00 am at the Tellico Ranger Station on the Tellico River Road (Forest Service Road 210). Wear long pants, sturdy shoes, gloves and a long sleeve shirt or coat. Bring a sack lunch, something to drink and all your friends. The first 100 participants will receive a t-shirt unique to the Tellico River Clean Up. For more information, call the Tellico Ranger Station at (423) 253-8400. This event is sponsored by the USDA Forest Service, TVA, Trout Unlimited, Chattanooga Trout Association, Keep Monroe County Beautiful, Atlanta Whitewater Club, Chota Canoe Club, and the Tellico Motorcycle Outfitters.

March 19, Day Hike: Lake Winfield Scott – Jarrard Gap – Slaughter Gap Loop Trail to/on the AT at Lake Winfield Scott, Suches, Georgia (6 Miles/Average difficulty). Wilderness Area – 12 person limit. This is a beautiful wildflower hike and a favorite of the botanical society. Fee area. Contact Person: Shirley Banks, email shirleymaybanks@gmail.com or call [404-644-4861](tel:404-644-4861).

March 26, Tennessee/North Carolina Work Trip: Details to be announced.

Welcome New BMTA Members!

Vid Fredlund

David Daniels, Cleveland, TN
Kathleen Pinson, Lawrenceville, GA
Carl Riggs, Suches, GA
Murrah Watson, Cohutta, GA
Nona Struck, Asheville, NC
Tripp Powers, Monroe, GA

**We look forward to
seeing you on the
trail or at any of
our events!**

Tennessee/North Carolina Work Trip, January 31

Rick Harris

BMT Section 13e - Towee Creek to Wildcat Creek - We put out a call for help in hauling in a lot of tools and equipment, and 15 volunteers answered the call on a somewhat rainy morning.

The objective of the trip was to install a new sign at the junction of the old John Muir Trail and new BMT/JMT reroute at Rock Island Branch, and repair tree damage to the tread. The repair required moving rocks and dirt and completing rock steps in a 3' deep hole left by an upended root ball. We also did some additional tread work on the steep slope below the root ball. By the time the small sign crew finished installing the sign, the rock crew had finished their work.

It was such a joy to have all of the help that we finished the work in just a few hours. On the way back downstream to the Appalachia Powerhouse, we also repaired another root ball hole in the tread of the old section of the John Muir Trail. It drizzled enough for many of us to put on rain gear, but we were back at the vehicles by the time the rainfall got serious.

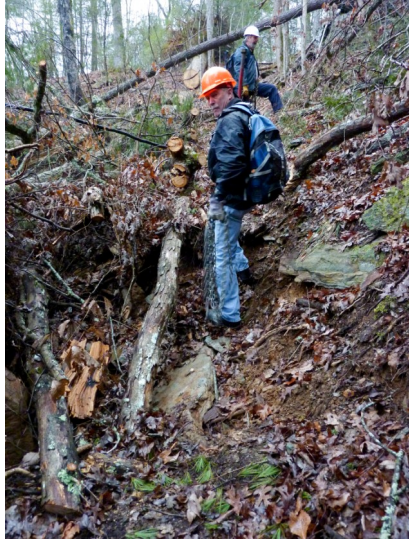
The table shows the volunteer

Name	Travel Hours	Work Hours	Totals
Ken Jones	2	3	5
Roger Taylor	1.5	3	4.5
Tom Smith	2	3	5
Tazz Reid	1.5	3	4.5
Blue Goodson	2.5	3	5.5
Clayton Pannell	1.5	3	4.5
Larry Dunn	2	3	5
Bobby Mitchell	2.5	3	5.5
Richard Harris	2	3	5
Philip Gooch	1.5	3	4.5
Jim Sirmans	1.5	3	4.5
Bill Hodge	2	3	5
Bill Lundin	3	3	6
Monty Simmons	1.5	1.5	3
Betty Petty	1.5	1.5	3
Totals	28.5	42	70.5



It was such a joy to have all of the help that we finished the work in just a few hours.

Photos this page and next by Bill Hodge



The “Crown Jewel” of the BMT in Georgia

Pam Sullivan

We reveled in unexpected warmth and sunshine.

February 19, we hiked to the Toccoa River Suspension bridge in Blue Ridge. After two canceled BMTA winter hikes, 13 lucky hikers reveled in unexpected warmth and sunshine. This hike was proudly led by Wes Clonts, who also maintains a section of this trail. Interested in this hike? Watch the slideshow of the event posted on YouTube (turn up sound, slow intro): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rgyec_J-Drw



Left: WOW! The Toccoa River bridge, part of the BMT, is one of the longest suspension bridges on a hiking trail.

Below: Fun hikers pause for a pic— but who is behind the sign?

Photos by Pam Sullivan

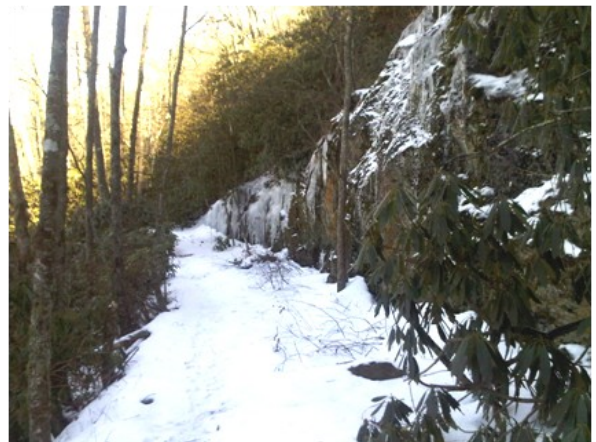


Brasstown Bald/Wagontrain Trail Sparkles in the Snow

Shirley Banks

On January 29, about 15 hikers gathered for breakfast at the Bread of Life restaurant in Young Harris, GA. After getting our fill of biscuits and coffee, we joined other hikers at a parking area near Young Harris College, where the Wagon Train Trail ends. As we shuttled up to Brasstown Bald, the snow from a few weeks prior became apparent. Atop the Bald, the highest point in Georgia, the snow was 6-8" deep. The day was brilliant. Since we had 22 people in our group, the peppy hikers left first, with the leisurely hikers forming a second group.

The first mile featured snow, but as we lost elevation we encountered ice in places where the snow had melted and re-frozen. This stretch was followed by a muddy section. By the time we returned to Young Harris, we were peeling layers, as the afternoon temperature was in the 60's. The views along this trail are rewarding, as are the rhododendron tunnels. The trail used to serve as a road for an annual celebration that included driving horse-drawn wagons up the Bald.



Top: Thick slabs of ice, though beautiful, called for concentration and skill to cross safely.

Middle: The scars from rock blasting became a backdrop for intricate ice and water configurations.

Bottom: There were few footprints in the snow atop Brasstown Bald.

Photos by Shirley Banks

Leaving a Footpath for Others to Follow

**BENTON MACKAYE TRAIL
ASSOCIATION**

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We're on the Web!
www.bmta.org



**SEFTC Leave No Trace
Trainer Course Registration Opens March 1**

Rick Harris

The Southeast Foot Trails Coalition is sponsoring a Leave Not Trace weekend Trainer Course in the Tellico Plains area of the Cherokee National Forest in Southeast Tennessee on June 25-26, 2011. The course will involve a short, easy overnight backpack trip into the Bald River Wilderness on the Bald River Trail. The SEFTC plans to conduct such a course every spring and fall in various areas around the Southeast, depending on how well this course goes.

The link for signups will be active on March 1 on the SEFTC website www.southeastfoottrails.org. Enrollment will be limited to fifteen participants, so those who want to take the course should sign up soon after March 1 when registration goes live. We ask that people not register before March 1.