



**Newsletter of the
Benton MacKaye Trail Association, Inc.**
Post Office Box 6
Cherry Log, GA 30522

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“Leaving a footpath for generations to follow.”

Directors



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<i>Newsletter</i>	<i>Open</i>

**New Benton MacKaye
Trail Association Office
opens in Blue Ridge, GA.**

The big news in July was the opening of our new Office in Blue Ridge, GA. Thanks to the generosity of Mr. Joe Sisson and members of his family, we were able to take over the old log cabin at the Sisson Sales Office on Route 515 in northern Georgia. The cabin, originally built in the 1870's, was moved to the present location a number of years ago, but had not been used by the Sisson folks. This Spring, Joe Sisson proposed to Georgia Maintenance Director (Acting) Ralph Heller, a swap of the utility shed at the Cherry Log Pavilion in exchange for letting the BMTA use this cabin. Over the July 8-10 time frame, several of the BMTA folks helped get things ready by wiring the building for lights and power, trimming the bushes, cleaning and setting things up in the building. The Georgia Maintenance folks are going to use part for their various stuff, and the other half, Marge Heller has set up as a display of the various awards and plaques the Association has received over the years. Plans are to try to have someone at the cabin on some of the more important Holidays to answer visitor questions. When unattended, there are brochures and contact information for folks who might be interested in the Trail. Many thanks to Ralph and Marge Heller who were instrumental in this effort!



Dick Evans installs ceiling fans in the eaves.



T.O. Mitchell labors replacing a broken floor board in 100 degree heat.

We will hold a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at 11:00 AM on Friday, August 19th with local officials and the Chambers of Commerce of both Fannin and Gilmer Counties. On Saturday, August 20th, we will have an Open House for the public and a get-together for local members of the BMTA, from 10:00 AM until 3:00 PM. Light refreshments will be served. If you live in the Ellijay / Blue Ridge / Murphy area, please come and say "Hello!"

ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION

Don't forget to make your reservations for the 2011 Benton MacKaye Trail Association Annual Meeting the weekend of November 4, 5 & 6 at Coker Creek Village, Tennessee. Go to the Website and click on the Annual Meeting Link. We have several great hikes scheduled on all three days, so you need to be there. This year, the formal Annual Meeting will be held at 4:30 PM, just before supper, to allow for a Coker Creek Hoe-Down Saturday evening. This promises to be a great meeting-grab your space now!

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

President Dick Evans has appointed David Blount, Ralph Heller, Ken Jones and Vic Fredlund as the Nominating Committee for the election. Interested in serving on the Board? We need several new folks to fill some key positions, including Newsletter Editor, Smokies Maintenance Director, and others. If you are interested, or want to give some suggestions to the Committee, just email :"President@BMTA.org" and we'll get your note to them for consideration. Have a say in the future of YOUR Association- serve on the Board!

BEST TRAIL IN NORTH CAROLINA

Backpacker Magazine has just rated the 17 mile stretch of the BMT in the northeastern corner of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park as the best trail in North Carolina. From Pretty Hollow Gap over Mount Sterling thru to Big Creek Ranger Station, it is described as "it just doesn't get any better." See photos and download a map at www.backpacker.com/hikes/10742 .

In other news from the Smokies, we have just reached a new agreement with the Park under the Volunteers in the Park Program, headed up by Christine Hoyer, whom you may remember from the 2010 Annual Meeting. The "VIP" Program is the formal agreement between volunteers and the National Park Service covering volunteer work in the Park. As before, we are obliged to maintain the back country campsites along the Lake Shore Trail portion of the BMT on a twice-a-year basis. This replaces the earlier agreement signed several years ago, and updates that information. As the Fall cleanup time approaches, we'll get more information out to the members. ++++++ With all this going on, we still had some work trips. On July 9th, we had the "Marty Domini-led" Bridge-A-Palooza" effort to get three back county bridges built in one trip. All three are located on the Sisson property in the Blue Ridge, GA., area. Joe Sisson donated most of the materials, and a great group showed up to get things started. Although we were not able to get all three completed, tremendous strides were made in getting footers and foundations poured (Try carrying 80 pound bags of concrete into the back country!)



Part of the "Bridge-A-Palooza" Crew!



Dene Sheheane and his son take a break for lunch.



Steve Bayliss grabbing a bite.



Crew Leader Marty Domini & Margaret Evans



T.O. Mitchell, Marge Heller and Margaret Evans at lunch.

JULY 16 – SLICKROCK WILDERNESS FUN HIKE

Billed by Trip Leader Dick Evans as a challenging six miler, with steam crossings, Copperheads and a steep uphill, this trip lived up to its billing! We had a total of 15 people, including the Slickrock Wilderness Rangers, Dakota Rogers and Chris Griggs, plus two local Robbinsville folks who had replaced a big bridge over a rockslide earlier this year.



Part of Slickrock Creek Trail.



At Slickrock Creek | BMT Trailhead.



Kids-Don't try this at home-you have to be a trained Wilderness Ranger to make this jump! (He is NOT on the log, he is in mid-air.)



Crossing Slickrock Creek



Brenda Harris cools off in Slickrock Creek.



Kendall Hobson admires the new bridge built by the two folks on the right.

Tennessee | North Carolina Work Trips

July 19, 2011 - BMT Section 15c - Tate Gap to Six Mile Gap - Phil Gooch and Jim Sirmans weed whacked the BMT section between Six Mile Gap and Tate Gap today.. It appears someone on an ATV (illegally) went through recently and cut all the logs off that section so it is really pristine right now. Volunteer Hours - 7 hours each.

July 11, 2011 - BMT Section 12c-d - Kimsey Hwy to Lost Creek CG - Ken Jones and Darcy Douglas worked from 8:00 to 3:00, him driving about 2 hours, she about 5, on Monday July 11. What we got done was this.....all blazes are painted between Kimsey Highway and the place on the ridge where the trail turns from west to east, north of the signed wildlife area a little less than 2 miles from the Lost Creek Campground. I was right that I had only missed about 2 in that middle section where you were using the chainsaw earlier this spring. I think that's the end of Sul's sections. We had to clear a lot of brush in order that blazes be seen heading northbound from FS23. They were there but covered up. Some were odd sizes, some 6 feet off the ground rather than our standard 5 feet, and some were off the trail because there were simply no other trees around on that grassy road walk. We did our very best to correct these situations so that the blazing is standard to aid the hiker and backpacker. Ken is pretty sure he remembers the blazing being pretty good from where we stopped down to the campground since he used the chainsaw there that same day earlier this spring. The variety of blazes out there reminded me again that it is better for the hiker and for the quality of our trail to have one person (and carefully chosen assistants) responsible for the trail marking. I would love to have the job again when I return from Alaska. You probably have enough good blazes to get by until then anyway! Thanks for the opportunity - oh, and please do something about those chiggers at my favorite camping spot - ooh, they are annoying!

Darcy Douglas, driving time 5 hrs, work time 7 hrs = 12 hrs

Ken Jones, driving time 2 hrs, work time 7 hrs = 9 hrs

July 6, 2011 - BMT Section 19b - Ernie Engman and his son William worked on their section repairing tread and removing two blowdowns. Volunteer hours - 9 Hours.

July 16-17, 2011 - BMT Section 19b - Ernie Engman and his son William cleared 8 blowdowns and lots of vegetation off their section near Slcikrock Creek on an overniter. 22 Volunteer Hours.