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President: Dick Evans
 Vice President: David Blount
 Secretary: Sara Bland
 GA Maintenance: Tom Keene
 TN/NC Maintenance: Rick Harris
 Smokies Coord: Ernie Engman
 Trail Construction: Bill Hodge
 Hiking: Vacant
 Membership: Vic Fredlund
 Treasurer: Kim Hainge
 Publicity: Marge Heller
 Newsletter Editor: Gene Nix
 Conservation: Betty Petty
 Past President: Ralph Heller
 State Rep GA: Bob Ruby
 State Rep TN: Vacant
 State Rep NC: **Vacant**

Suspension Bridge over the Toccoa River:
 By Ralph Heller



VOLUME 29, ISSUE 8 SEPTEMBER 1, 2012

SAVE THE DATE! 2012 BMTA ANNUAL MEETING

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend this year's annual meeting which will be held Saturday, November 10, 2012. The venue will be the North Georgia Community Center which is located on Industrial Boulevard in Ellijay, Georgia. This location is very convenient to Georgia Highway 515, being within a couple of blocks of the Hardees and Food Lion, both of which are visible from "the big road."



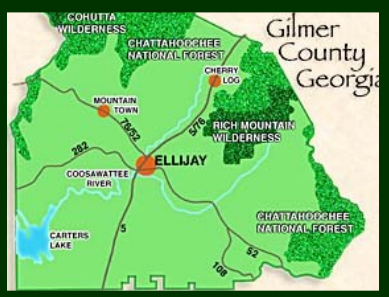
North Georgia Community Center

Come participate in the election of officers for the 2013 Board of Directors and enjoy a hike or two and dinner with your fellow trail supporters. The annual meeting is a great opportunity to put down the tools and fellowship with existing friends and to make new friends. It is the best opportunity of the year to meet the directors, ask questions, and learn more about the history and purpose of the Association and the Trail.

Ellijay offers city conveniences with a country atmosphere and good access to the BMT and other trails. The meeting and dinner, the details of which are still being finalized, will be late afternoon or early evening. Stay tuned for more information regarding the fun hike schedule for that weekend as well as the dinner menu and cost per person. As always, there is no charge to attend the business meeting of the association and your attendance and participation is

welcomed and encouraged. I look forward to seeing you there!

David Blount
 Annual Meeting Chairperson



Nominations Report

2013 Board Of Directors

This year's nominating committee is made up of Vic Fredlund, Ernie Engman, Ralph Heller, George Owen, and David Blount. The committee's nominations are shown below by position. Nominations may also be presented from the floor at the Annual Meeting of the Association which will take place Saturday November 10, 2012 at the North Georgia Community Center, Ellijay, Georgia.

Respectfully submitted,
David Blount
Nomination Committee Chairman

Nominations for the 2013 Board

President	David Blount
Vice President	Darcy Douglas
Secretary	Sara Bland
Treasurer	Margaret Evans
GA Maintenance	Tom Keene
Smokey Maintenance	Open
Tenn Maintenance	Ernest Engman
Construction	Bill Hodge
Membership	Vic Fredlund
Publicity	Marge Heller
Hiking	Ralph Heller
Newsletter	Gene Nix
Conservation	George Owen



Southeastern Foot Trails Coalition Invites All BMTA Members to Tennessee's Cumberland Plateau Gathering in September

By Marge Heller and Rick Harris...

The BMTA is a member of the Southeastern Foot Trails Coalition. The SEFTC is a coalition of hiking and trail maintenance organizations in the Southeast, representing over 40 clubs from Florida to Virginia and Kentucky. All **BMTA Members** have been invited to attend their meeting at beautiful **Fall Creek Falls State Park** in southeastern Tennessee, about 70 miles north of Chattanooga, **September 20-23, 2012**. Come for all 4 days or stay as little as one overnight. A variety of hikes are planned. Special speakers will be giving presentations on various hiking and trail club topics such as:

- Mountaintop removal and its effect on our trails and wildlife
- Wilderness Medicine
- Rebuilding poorly designed trails
- The future of Wilderness
- Challenges in managing a linear trail such as the BMT and AT

Entertainment is planned for each evening.....Lots of Music and More!

Also, the youngest child to ever thru-hike the AT will speak after the banquet. He thru-hiked the AT at age 8 with his parents as a Cub Scout.

Go to website: www.southeastfoottrails.com to learn more about the conference and for the registration form. The website provides links to pages for housing, meals, workshops and hikes. Don't delay...sign up today!



Fall Creek Falls

Benton MacKaye Trail Map ...

By Dick Evans

In early August, BMTA President Dick Evans, Treasurer Kim Hainge and Membership Director Vic Fredlund met with Jeanne Matheny of Misty Meadow Studios to give final approval to the Benton MacKaye Trail Wall Map. This is an overview of the entire Trail, with associated towns, mountains and other scenic points. Created by the late Dwight Matheny and then finished by his widow, Jeanne, this map will be available in folded, rolled and laminated versions on the BMTA Store Website



within a few weeks. Measuring some 16" x 38" (exact finished size pending), this will be a great addition to your home showing friends what takes so much of our time!



Misty Meadows Studios is best known for their "Backroads Less Traveled Maps" series of maps of the tri-state area, showing visitor and tourist attractions in a creative and fun way. The BMT Wall Map was started last summer, but delayed by the untimely death of Dwight. Jeanne had to master the complexity of trying to complete the map, and the result is a great collaboration of their efforts and input by various BMTA members in getting the highlights of the Trail onto the finished product.

"Great News! As this edition was being finalized, we learned that the new BMTA Wall Map is just about ready. It is a beautiful 18" x 36" map of the entire route of the BMT. Watch for an email in a few days when it is ready for sale!"

My Side Of The Campfire



I had a chance earlier this month to reflect on our motto of "Leaving a footpath for generations to follow." My nine-year old Great Nephew Christopher came down from Cape Cod for his first true "wilderness backpacking" trip, and naturally, I took him on part of the Benton MacKaye Trail in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. We were able to do this because of folks before us who "left a footpath" for our generation to follow, and we, in turn, are leaving a legacy for the future. Every time we go on a work trip, assist in a display for the public, meet with public officials or even talk with friends, we are helping to secure this wonderful trail for the future. Any trail is ephemeral. If not maintained and publicized, it will fall into disuse and be targeted by cash-strapped agencies for closure because there appears to be little public demand for that trail. But, just usage is not really enough, it has to have proper and appropriate usage. When hiking, we need to keep Leave No Trace Principles in mind. The old adage of "Pack It In-Pack It Out" still applies. Ernie Engman put it very well in his "Thru-Hikers Guide" when he said "The one thing none of (the Maintainers) like doing is cleaning up after hikers. Spending hours side-hilling or cutting blowdowns is expected. Spending 2 hours cleaning out campsites of trash is not." When we are hiking or camping, we need to, gently, make sure that other hikers realize the effects of their actions. Many of us used to throw banana peels into the woods after a trail lunch-we now realize that this creates a problem for wildlife, even though one peel seems insignificant. We need to spread this knowledge to others. Leaving a footpath is more than the physical trail on the ground, it is a philosophy of how to use that resource. Maintenance Director Bill Hodge would call it "Stewardship", taking personal "ownership" of the land, treating it like you would like to leave it for your future generations. During my hike with Christopher, we were looking for litter along the trail, and we only found a small piece of plastic wrapper on 5 miles of trail. The campsites were clean and appealing, trail maintained to an appropriate standard for a wilderness trail, signage adequate for navigation with a trail map, etc. In short, he had a great time, due to many folks in the past caring enough to leave a natural experience for him. We need to all make sure we are doing the same.



See you on the Trail!

Dick

Save Georgia's Hemlocks Helps USFS Treat Trees in National Forest

By Donna Shearer

Through the Cost Share Agreement established between the U.S. Forest Service and Save Georgia's Hemlocks, we recently completed a second project helping the USFS treat hemlocks against Hemlock Woolly Adelgid infestation in the Long Creek Falls Hemlock Conservation Area of the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest. Under the direction of USFS Wildlife Biologist Jim Wentworth and Forest Silviculturist Brian Jackson, eight volunteers from SGH and four members of Go Outdoors USA gathered at Three Forks in Fannin County and spent most of Saturday, June 23, treating three sites of pre-tagged hemlocks with Imidacloprid.

The next opportunity to participate in a treatment project in the National Forest will be our Hike and Help the Hemlocks event in the Noontootla area on Saturday, September 29. Call 706-429-8010 to sign up.

(Editors Note: Save Georgia's Hemlocks, a member of the BMTA and its founder, Donna Shearer, are both valuable assets to our Trail. Your participation on September 29 is needed and will be appreciated. Sign up today!)



Save Georgia's Hemlocks

Ellijay Georgia Designated As An Appalachian Trail Community...

Shirley Crouch of North Georgia Mountain Outfitters...

Ellijay, Georgia will be officially designated as an Appalachian Trail Community September 14, 2012. The ceremony will take place at 10:00 a.m., at the Gilmer Chamber of Commerce office located at 696 First Avenue, East Ellijay (between Waffle House and Advance Auto Parts).

Speakers will include representatives of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, U. S. Forest Service rangers, thru-hikers and leaders from the local community. Gene Espy, the second person to thru-hike the AT, will speak and be on hand to sign copies of his book, "The Trail of My Life."

The BMTA has been invited to attend the ceremony. President Dick Evans and Editor Gene Nix will man the Benton MacKaye Trail Display.

Mark your calendars and come out to support the conservation, stewardship and awareness of the AT, the grandfather of American trails.



(Editor's note: Shirley, Travis and Whitney Crouch are members and loyal supporters of the Benton MacKaye Trail. Their store, North Georgia Mountain Outfitters, located in Ellijay, sells BMT Guidebooks and you can count on them for good advice on hiking .)

Leaving A Footpath For Generations To Follow

By: John Nix

My name is Jonathan Nix and my father asked me to write about the things we have done and seen on the Benton MacKaye trail. One of my most favorite things I've seen on the trail is a Diamondback rattlesnake and two bears. When we were going to get a lost sling blade, we also got attacked by hornets. After the attack, I still had to get my hiking pole that was dropped when we ran away.

Some of the things I have done on the trail is to



make water flow better so hikers can collect water. Sometimes, when we are camping, there are storms. We have had hail and a tree limb fall near our tent. My advice to hikers is to get shelter when it starts hailing or storming so that you don't die (from hypothermia or getting struck by lightning). We hike a lot. Sometimes we just hike and sometimes we hike and spend the night. I love it when we spend the night except when raccoons eat our food in the trees. To wrap this all up, me and my father think this is a great trail and so do the other people that hike it and do maintenance. We hope you'll hike it too.



John is a fourth grader at Mountain View Elementary School in Ellijay. Besides hiking, John enjoys baseball, basketball, and also holds his blue belt in Tae Kwon Do. John has been hiking since he was six years old and one day hopes to thru hike the Benton MacKaye Trail.

Section 7a near Blue Ridge looking For A Maintainer

By Tom Keene

Section 7a from Weaver Creek Road to Highway 515 feels neglected and would like some attention.

This 2.6 mile section, near Blue Ridge, is very accessible and is easy to maintain; approximately 1 mile is a road walk on county roads through private properties. The road walk portion will only occasionally need blaze refreshment and litter removal. The rest of Section 7a, starting at the end Weaver Creek Road, goes through about .5 miles of Chattahoochee National Forest following an unused old road bed. It then passes through a gate and follows the old road bed on private land until it reaches a large beautiful uninhabited meadow with views of Long Mountain to the north. After passing through the meadow, the trail crosses Laurel Creek, which must be forded. The trail then continues on the road bed through the same private land for about ½ miles to where it crosses Laurel Creek again on a bridge and then continues on county maintained Laurel Creek Road.



of

Section 7a would be a great section of the trail for a first-time maintainer. It is almost entirely level. Since it follows an old road bed, vegetation growth is easily removed and very little other maintenance except blazing would be required. The ¼ mile section through the meadow will require a little more attention since it receives a lot of sunlight.

Any takers?

Contact Tom Keene, GA Maintenance Director - tkbmta@gmail.com

September 8 Georgia Work Trip



BMTA Members and friends,

The weather is cooling off. Time to get our in the woods. It's better than football!

September's GA trip is on beautiful, isolated Section Eight. It should be a treat. Details below.

First-timers warmly welcome! Just check here for what to bring, etc. : <http://www.bmta.org/pdfs/WorktripsWhatToExpect-revSep2011.pdf>

Join us!

September 8 Georgia Work Trip. We will work both directions from McKenny Gap on beautiful, isolated Section Eight. We will mostly clear summer growth, but also refresh some side-hilling and install some water diversions. Something for everybody! Don't miss it! We meet for breakfast at the L&A Corner (store&restaurant) across from the Pink Pig in Cherrylog at 8AM. Or meet at the Bushy Head Gap trailhead at 9:15 AM. Trip leader is Tom Keene – 770-548-4935.

Tom Keene
Georgia Maintenance Director
Benton MacKaye Trail



BMTA Publicity... Marge Heller

By Sara Bland

For members who know Marge, they can attest to the fact that she is steadfast and assertive in getting the word out on the BMTA. She is relentless in her devotion of time and talent towards her goal of promoting the Trail. In addition, she has befriended and involved those of us who have shared hiking experiences with her, thereby making many of us BMTA



enthusiasts. Her dedication is inspiring and, by increasing public knowledge of the association through newspaper articles, BMTA display booths at various events, chamber of commerce involvement etc., she has helped increase BMTA membership. Also, Marge and her husband Ralph helped to develop the new Easy Trek Hikes which has reached and will continue to reach a new category of hikers — many of whom already became members. So, here's to you, Marge... keep the momentum going!

Marge and Ralph retired to Cherry Log, GA 6 years ago. Marge's work experience includes a media background with two major advertising agencies in Chicago and Miami and most recently sales experience in the insurance field. Besides continuing to follow Ralph on various trails, since they met 45 years ago, she loves to travel and paint almost as much as she loves being Nana to their 5 granddaughters.

(Editor's Note: This is the last of the 'Meet Your Board Members' series. Look at back issues, beginning January 2012, for monthly stories on the current BMTA Board.)

Georgia Department of Natural Resources Trail Survey

Hikers!

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources is conducting a survey of trail use in the state. Go to www.surveymonkey.com/s/GeorgiaTrails to make your opinions known. In particular, you might want to comment about the impact of the Georgia Outdoor Recreation Pass (GORP) on trail use on state lands.



Please note that this survey is ONLY for State lands, not Federal.

Bob Ruby will be speaking on the BMTA, September 9 at the REI in Buford and September 20 at the REI at Perimeter. See www.bmta.org for more information.

Congratulations to Don Davis of Champaign, IL for being posted on our walk of fame page. [Benton MacKaye Trail Assn. - BMT 300-Milers](#)

TN/NC BMTA Worktrip - July 28, 2012



By Rick Harris

Saturday, July 28, 2012 - BMT Section 13a-c - JMT area - Eight maintainers came together to clear the BMT from the Childers Creek Trailhead to the Towee Creek Trailhead along the JMT. Robert Owenby started from the Childers Creek trailhead and headed toward Big Bend with a lawnmower, mowing down the high weeds, at least until he hit something and bent the lawnmower blade. He then came around to Big Bend to join the rest of us. Rick Harris, Clayton Pannell, and Lara Winner with chainsaw in hand logged out the BMT from Big Bend to a point a short ways past the stone stairs heading toward Childers Creek, removing several logs. At the turn around point they came upon the huge mess of trees left by Clayton and Robert the previous weekend. By then Robert had joined us. We were able to remove two large trees off the top, one of which was



about 18" in diameter, but the 24" tree flat on the ground was too large to get with our smallish chain saw. One can climb over it, but we will have to ask Steve Biatowas to come in with his long arm saw to get this one. Richard Sullivan, Mike O'Brien and Roger Taylor brushed out the trail heading the other direction, from Towee Creek to Big Bend. They cut out some small trees, but only left on larger tree which is flat on the ground and easy to step over. When they returned, they also headed down toward Childers Creek to brush out the section the others were logging out. Thus, the JMT from Childers Creek to Towee Creek is now in good shape, except for the one huge tree they could not get. Larry Dunn painted blazes along the



roadway from Childers Creek to the Lost Creek section, as planned. Also, a few days before, Larry Dunn and Steve Biatowas had logged out the BMT from Towee Creek to Coker Creek. And before that, a crew had logged out the BMT along the Lost Creek section. Thus the entire BMT from Lost Creek Campground to Coker Creek should be in very good shape.

A Total of 58 Volunteer Hours Were Accumulated.

TN/NC BMTA Worktrip - August 1, 2012



By Rick Harris

August 1, 2012 - BMT Section 19c - TAPOCO Section - On a hot morning, Dick and Margaret Evans, and Ernie and William Engman, met to do battle with the Tapoco Section. Located on Alcoa property at the Tennessee/North Carolina border, this section connects the Joyce Kilmer Slickrock Wilderness with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. About five miles in length, it has two distinct sections, the nearly 2 mile section from Cheoah Dam following in part the Original routing of the AT, and then the 3 mile section on unused gravel



road. This area had a wildfire a couple of years ago, in addition to being hit hard by the Pine Bark Beetle a couple of years ago. This results in an area that is pretty challenging to maintain in top condition.

Starting at the Cheoah Dam, we headed uphill anticipating many blowdowns, and we were not disappointed. Almost immediately, we were presented with deadfall trees and heavy brush. Leaving Margaret to clip vines, Ernie, William and Dick headed upwards, cutting as we went. In the first 3/4 mile, we removed some 30 blowdowns, and found heavy brush in the burned-over area. By the time we reached "Mayapple Gap" area, the temperature had climbed to over 90' with 100% humidity. About 1 PM, we decided to return, as Margaret had lost the Trail in the heavy brush, and everyone was soaked to the skin with sweat.



On the way down, we installed a number of additional trail signs, pictured, to help folks find their way thru the burned out area and the heavy brush. We anticipate that there are large numbers of blowdowns on the gravel road, but we can reach them using a vehicle, at some point in the future. The heavy brush on the trail will require a major work trip early this Fall to clear. Pictured with William is one blowdown that was just too big for our chainsaw. We cleared an easy "hop over" to get past it, but hikers will encounter heavy vines until we can get back, but should be able to follow the trail.

A Total of 20 Volunteer Hours Were Accumulated.

TN/NC BMTA Worktrip - August 14, 2012



Tuesday, August 14, 2012 - BMT Section 13b - Childers Creek Section of JMT

Clayton Pannell and Robert Owenby finished brushing and logging out their section with the help of Steve Biatowas. They mowed with lawn mowers from about a mile in from each end of the trail, cut out two new downfalls since the last trip and with the help of Steve Biatowas, USFS, they removed the huge tree about in the middle of the section that the crew the previous month was unable to clear with their short chainsaws.



A Total of 17 Volunteer Hours Were Accumulated.

TN/NC BMTA Worktrip - August 16, 2012



August 16, 2012 - BMT Section

15b - Tate Gap to Six Mile Gap

Jim Sirmins and friends cleared their section of trail today of brush and logs.

**A Total of 15 Volunteer
Hours Were
Accumulated.**



By Rick Harris

August Joint GA Work Trip "Gets It Done"

By George Owen

Eleven Georgians showed up for the BMTA's contingent to the annual Benton MacKaye Trail – Hemptop Trail joint brushing with the workers from the U.S. Forest Service Conasauga District's volunteer program (two groups: Team Conasauga and Backcountry Horsemen of North Georgia) – just over thirty people totally.

This annual event in the Cohutta Wilderness (exception – not held last year) focuses on completely trimming one mile of Hemptop Trail out of Dally Gap and another 4.4 miles of joint Hemptop – Benton MacKaye Trail to the Tennessee state line at Double-Spring Gap, 5.4 miles totally. Most volunteers were slingblading all the way, but a few had lopping assignments.



After a brief noon lunch, the bulk of the workers at 1:06 p.m. finally met the few horsemen who had gone to the state line and were working back toward the rest over about three-quarters mile. So since most of us had gone in over at least five miles, our total walk for the day was over ten miles. Thanks to cooler than usual August weather – in the 70s – the walk each way on the high ridge was rather pleasant.

When we BMTAers returned to Dally Gap and our vehicles mid-afternoon, cut watermelon and soft drinks were awaiting us. Oh, how refreshing! Then all made their way homeward, but six of us stopped about 5:00 p.m. for early dinner at the Pink Pig to top off the day.

BMTA ATTENDEES: Barry Allen, Jeff Anderson, David Blount, Claire Broadwell, Steve Davis, Larry Dumas, Ralph Heller, Michael Mettee, Michael O'Brien, George Owen, Mark Yost

TOTAL HOURS WORKED: 71.5

TOTAL HOURS TRAVEL: 45.0

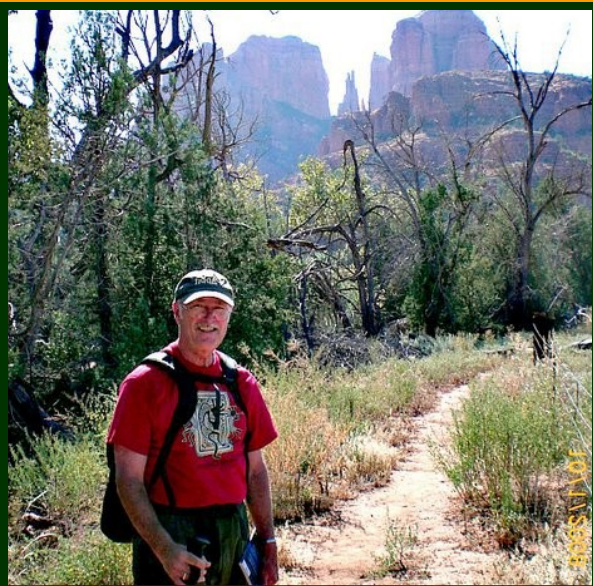
Hike Inn Presentation...by Ralph Heller

Several weeks ago Bob Ruby called me and asked if I would like to give the BMTA Power-Point presentation at the Hike Inn. Bob has done a great job the past few years giving presentations at REI, the Hike Inn, and other locations. He was scheduled on August 6 at the inn, then was canceled due to a lack of guests, and then was called again to give the presentation due to more reservations coming in. In the meantime, he had made other plans.



I jumped at the opportunity to revisit one of my favorite places. Last December the BMTA and Mountain High Hikers sponsored a trip to the inn and they literally occupied all 20 guest rooms. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the Hike Inn, it is a lodge that guests must hike 5 ½ miles to reach. There are very few facilities like this in the states, although they are common in Europe,

especially Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. The trail head is located at parking lot at the top of the falls in Amicalola State Park. The accommodations are semi rustic. The guest rooms are barely large enough to accommodate a bunk bed. Each stacked bunk is just big enough to hold one person. Stash your pack and hang some clothes on pegs and the room is just about full. There is a small pad that can be put on the floor next to the bunk if you have a child with you. When you arrive and check in, you are given a pillow case stuffed with clean sheets and a bath towel and wash cloth. You make your own bed.



Continued On Next Page

Hike Inn Presentation...Continued

Once you pass thru the bunk house, you come to the bath house. One side is for the men and the other for women. A special feature of this facility is hot showers. Most hike in facilities in the US and Europe do not have hot showers and hair dryer receptacles. Also, the bath house, commensurate with Hike Inn conservation commitment, has self sustaining compost toilets.

The next building houses the kitchen and dining area. Thirsty hikers and find an assortment of liquid refreshment and cookies in the dining room when they first arrive at the inn. When the dinner bell rings, everyone gathers there for really great and plentiful food. The seating is family style and heaping bowls are passed around the tables. The night I was there, we had roast pork, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, and Caesar salad. Dessert was home made cake.

Below the dining hall is the Sunrise Room. This area is used for after dinner activities such as cards, scrabble, book reading, and some presentations. If the presentation requires PowerPoint, then a Hike Inn supplied projector is set up in the dining area.

My BMT presentation in the dining area went well, I hope. Bob's knowledge of the BMT is a hard act to follow. I highly recommend the Hike Inn as a good destination for an easy overnight trip. Maybe we can organize another BMTA trip there this next year. For more info on the Hike Inn, go to <http://hike-inn.com>.

