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President's Column to resume in June Newsletter. Dick is on vacation!

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Suspension Bridge over the Toccoa River:
By Ralph Heller



VOLUME 29, ISSUE 5

MAY 26, 2012

BMTA American Hiking Society Volunteer Vacation...April 22-28, 2012



By Richard Harris

The BMTA again sponsored an AHS Volunteer Vacation in the Cherokee National Forest, only the second we have ever done. Similar to last fall's V V, the crew stayed at the Ranger House, located at the Tellico Ranger District Office in Tellico Plains. The work done this year was based on the reports from the 2012 BMTA Walk-Thru.

Volunteer Vacation Crew For This Year

John Carmichael, Brownsburg, IN – Crew Leader (was here last fall as well)

Elizabeth Miller, Littleton, CO

Jane Greischar, Madison, WI

Jim Kern, Webster Groves, MO

Karen Stearns, Riverdale, MI

Mona Lloyd, Hamburg, NY

Patty Pikul, Hamburg, NY

Steve Rountree, Ridgeland, SC



Click For The Volunteer Vacation Web Album



Always Give The Newsletter and Web Pages Time To Load...

Join us for National Trails Day!!!!



By Darcy Douglas

The BMTA is joining with Mountain High Hikers on Saturday, June 2 to celebrate this day with hiking, food, and fellowship. We'll be meeting at Black Rock State Park in Mountain City, GA, just north of Clayton. Each vehicle will need a state parking pass so you may want to consider carpooling. Hikers will meet at the Pavilion #1 (the Overlook Shelter), which we have reserved, at 9:00 in the morning prepared to hike (water, hiking boots, etc). The potluck picnic meal begins at 12:30. **Everyone coming should bring food to serve about 8, please.** The two clubs will be providing paper goods, ice, and drinks. Bringing a lawn chair or 2 might be helpful, too.



Here are the hikes (long hike still needs leader):

Short hikes (approx. 3.5 mi. total): series of short hikes with lake, vista and cove views, varying in difficulty. These include the moderate 2.2 mile loop Tennessee Rock Trail up over Tenn. Rock on top of Black Rock Mtn; the Black Rock Lake Trail, 0.85 mi. easy loop trail; the ADA Hi Falls Trail, 0.5 mi. RT, moderate; and the new 0.1 mi. Norma Campbell Cove Trail.

Hike leaders: George Owen, Richard Sullivan

Long hike (approx. 7.2 difficult): the James E. Edmond Backcountry Loop Trail climbs to the summit of Lookoff Mountain and offers a stunning vista of Wolfork Valley and surrounding mountain ranges.

Potluck picnic follows. **Hike leader: ??????** volunteers? Contact Darcy

Please contact Darcy Douglas (404-497-0818, bmtadarcy@yahoo.com) for any questions



May 19 Easy Trek Hike On Section 6

By Ralph Heller

There could not have been a better day for a hike. There were 17 Easy Trekkers, including hike leader Ralph Heller, who turned out on this gorgeous day. The weather was perfect. The sky was clear, once the fog burned off, and the temperature never quite reached 80 degrees. As this was a one-way hike we all caravanned to the trail head at Weaver Creek Road and left some cars at that location. Then everyone shuttled to the Fall Creek Falls trail head on Section 6.

About half of the group had never seen this waterfall. They were not disappointed. There was heavy water flow in the creek from rain the night before causing this cascade to put on a great show.

Farther along the way, we saw some spectacular displays of blooming Mountain Laurel and Flaming Azaleas. The fern fields along the trail at Rocky Mountain and the north side of Davenport Mountain were beginning to fill out for their summer splendor. Also, the white bloom stalks of the Galax plant were peaking at the upper elevations. Unfortunately, all the Lady Slipper blooms were long gone. Section 6d has a large number of



Odie Fatral and Walt Polk



Clayton Webster, Terry & Teemi Caskey, Odie Fatral, Roy Bennett, Walt Polk, Mark Yost, Nancy Sauls, David Goodwin, Wendy Knowles, Luke Saunders, Matthew Bollinger, Cody Bollinger, Jerry & Sara Bland, Chris Curtin and Ralph Heller, Hike Leader)

these flowers for about a mile, and the hike was scheduled for the time of year they are normally in bloom. However, this year, due to the mild winter, they bloomed about a month early. Nevertheless, numerous plants with spent blossom stalks were visible along the way, giving evidence that they had indeed put on a good show earlier.

Although this hike was longer and more difficult than previous Easy Trek outings, we kept a slower pace and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. Sarah and Gerry Bland did a good job as sweeps, and everyone finished together. We had a great group of hikers.

April 21 Easy Trek on Cherry Log's BMT



By Sara Bland

Windshield wipers were slapping hard as Jerry and I traveled to Cherry Log for our scheduled hike. After much deliberation and amateur weather forecasting between some of us, we decided to head out in the event that maybe one or two might want to brave the rain. When we arrived at the former site of Cherry Log Christian Church, we were pleasantly surprised to see twelve other hearty souls waiting to hit the trail notwithstanding the elements. We headed out through the beautiful Sisson property along the swiftly-moving creek and by the cozy cabins nestled in the woods. As we trekked, there was light-hearted conversation and little mention of the continuing rain. What a great group! We all stopped for a group photo by Marge on the porch of the surreal little chapel situated by the pond. Those of us who know

Marge, know that she is pretty ruthless when it comes to getting photos to publicize the BMTA. The rain did not deter her for one second! Finally, about the time we arrived at the beautiful Sisson shelter, on the BMT. The rain had almost disappeared. We all huddled inside the shelter for a break and a snack. Ralph

took the opportunity to enlighten us with BMTA information and answered questions from the group. Some of the good-natured and resilient hikers were pretty wet but still smiling by the time we arrived back at the Church parking lot. Ralph took several of the newer hikers to the BMTA headquarters for a little "tour". Almost everyone convened at the Pink Pig for a delicious after hike lunch. We all loved our time together and the hike, but a little sunshine would not hurt on the next one.



Attendees:

Roy Bennett, Ralph and Marge Heller, Walter Polk, Mark and Kathy Yost, Wendy Knowles, Chris Curtin, Nancy Hosler, Marge Heller, Bill Click, Doug and Emily Jones, and Sara and Jerry Bland. BMTA Founding Member George Owen met us on the end of the hike and joined us for fellowship at the Pink Pig.



TN/NC BMTA Walk-Thru



By Richard Harris, TN/NC Maintenance Director

All 106.3 miles of the TN/NC BMT were walked by BMT volunteers this year, but not on a single day. Many of the walk-thrus were done on other days more convenient to the volunteers. Due to the spread out of the walk-thru dates we did not have any get-together before or after the walk-thru. Most everyone used the online form and sent in GPS waypoints and pictures as requested. Most every sign was photographed as well, and these will be entered into the Sign Database.



The information was collated and was used to plan for the American Hiking Society Volunteer Vacation which was held in the Cherokee National Forest sector of the BMT April 22-28 (see separate story). Based on the walk-thru reports, those sections of trail needing the most attention were targeted for the work week. The information will also be used for planning future TN/NC monthly work trips. The reports with pictures and maps showing the location of the waypoints were sent to each section maintainer.

Thanks, everyone, for the tremendous job! Walk-thruers were as follows:

- Tennessee & North Carolina -

| Sec # | Description | Available/Taken |
|-------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 11a | Double Spring Gap – Big Frog Mt. | Zoe & John Zartis |
| 11b | Big Frog Mt. – Fork Ridge Trail | Zoe & John Zartis |
| 11c | Fork Ridge Trail – Rough Creek Trail | Bill Hodge/Jeff Hunter |
| 11d | Rough Creek Trail – USFS Road 221 | Bill Hodge/Jeff Hunter |
| 11e | USFS Rd 221 – US Hwy 64 | Rick Harris & Rick Foster |
| 12a | US 64 – Dry Pond Lead high point | Rick Harris/Bill Lundin |
| 12b | Dry Pond Lead – Kimsey Highway | Marc Bernatti |
| 12c | Kimsey Hwy – McFarland Rd, FS 23 | Marc Bernatti |
| 12d | McFarland – White Oak Flats, FS 103 | Rick Harris, Tom Smith, Rick Foster |
| 12e | FS 103 – FS 173 - trestle | Betty Petty |
| 13a | Trestle – John Muir Tr at Childers Crk | Gary Day |
| 13b | Childers Creek – Big Bend | Gary Day |
| 13c | Big Bend – Towee Creek | Gary Day |
| 13d | Towee Creek – Wildcat Creek | Richard Sullivan/Mike O'Brien |
| 13e | Wildcat Creek – FS 228 | Zoe & John Zardis |
| 14a | FS 228 – Unicoi Mt Trail (TN Hwy 68) | Bill Hodge |
| 14b | TN Hwy 68 – Buck Bald Road | Bill Hodge |
| 14c | Buck Bald Road – Unicoi Gap | Bill Hodge |
| 15a | Unicoi Gap – Tate Gap | Ernie Culpepper |

TN/NC BMTA 2012 Walk-Thru Hikers

- Tennessee & North Carolina -

| | | |
|-----|--|--------------------------------------|
| 15b | Tate Gap – Sixmile Gap | Regina Reiter |
| 15c | Sixmile Gap – Sandy Gap | Regina Reiter |
| 16a | Sandy Gap – Round Top, State Line | Regina Reiter |
| 16b | Round Top – Sledrunner Gap | Marty Dominy/Lara Winner |
| 16c | Sledrunner Gap – Brookshire Creek xing | Regina Reiter |
| 16d | Brookshire Cr. – Sugar Mountain Road | Regina Reiter |
| 16e | Sugar Mt. Rd – Tellico River Rd (FS 210) | Regina Reiter |
| 17a | Tellico River Rd. – Mangan Branch | Brenda Harris |
| 17b | Mangan Branch – FS 61B | Brenda Harris |
| 17c | Sycamore Creek Trailhd – Mud Gap | Rick Harris |
| 17d | Mud Gap – Beech Gap, Nantahala NF | Rick Harris |
| 18a | Beech Gap – Pine Ridge Trail Int. | Rick Foster |
| 18b | Pine Ridge Trail Int. – Farr Gap | Rick Foster, Rick Harris |
| 18z | Big Stack Gap Branch Tr. – (spur) | ?David Blount, Tom Smith? |
| 19a | Stiffknee Tr, Farr Gap – Slickrock Creek | Jon Faraone |
| 19b | Slickrock Crk + Ike Br Trls – US Hwy 129 | Dick Evans |
| 19c | US Hwy 129, Tapoco trailhead – Deals Gap | Bill Lundin, also Doug Stoeppelwerth |



(c) Mark Morrison

Georgia's Cool May Work Trip Has Instruction and Construction

By George Owen

It looked all day as though our BMTA May 12 new trail construction trip out of No-Name Gap would get rain – and some was predicted – but nary a drop fell on our work crew at all. Instead, it was cool and breezy, flying insects stayed away, and it was a great work trip for the eleven who turned out and worked. (Two more showed up at the Three Forks meeting place over a half-hour late, but never found the work site.)



Tom Keene Taking Picture



Taylor and David

Our trip was highlighted by two guests I had invited to join us. Early on I had asked recently retired Forest Service employee/trails technician **David Kuykendall** to come out and give us some on-the-ground training in “dips and knicks” – the modern way to build and drain trails: rolling grade dips, grade reversals, and knicks; these are techniques to improve trails and move beyond the more temporary and less satisfactory overall solution of waterbars. David took time with all then in small groups to give specific practice in creating these.

Our other guest was Kuykendall's replacement on the Blue Ridge Ranger District (Blairsville), **Taylor Hamilton**, who arrived just over a month ago here from the Talladega National Forest at the district office in Heflin, AL. She joined with David in giving us on-location instruction in the newer techniques of trail water drainage mentioned above.

Continued On Next Page

Georgia Work Trip On May 12, 2012 Has Instruction and Construction

David was also glad to see and note that we already had some rolling grade dips and grade reversals in the portions of this relocation previously constructed. Taylor and David did the instruction in the morning and then joined us in the afternoon for some hardy trail digging.

Despite some time out for instructions mentioned above, most of our day (several hours) were devoted by each of us to digging the new trail route with Pulaskis, fire rakes, McLeods, and hoes. The section had been cleared of brush and prepped for this work Saturday by yours truly a few days earlier, so construction moved right along.

We are now somewhere between two-thirds and three-fourths the way toward having this No-Name Gap northward relocation finished. **The Georgia work trip on June 9 is scheduled to return here.**

The work of all of you is especially appreciated this month in moving this project closer to completion. Thank you, and a very special big thanks also to Taylor Hamilton and David Kuykendall for joining us and contributing to our trail knowledge, expertise, and efforts.

May 12 GA Trail Construction Crew: David Blount, Claire Broadwell, Darcy Douglas, Taylor Hamilton, Ralph Heller, Tom Keene, David Kuykendall, George Owen, Curt Voogt, John Zardis, Zoe Zardis.

(Margaret Meadows and Debbie Tuten were delayed in arriving at Three Forks and were unable to connect with the work crew.)



Lunch Break

Work Hours: 66.5 Travel Hours: 35.5

Fearless Foursome Prep Trail

Route for June Construction

By George Owen

Four of us BMTAers visited the site of the BMT reroute Friday, May 18, at No-Name Gap 2.6 miles north of Three Forks to prepare the last twenty-plus percent of the proposed route for final completion hopefully on the June 9 Georgia maintenance trip.

Darcy Douglas, Michael O'Brien, George Owen, and Mark Yost each worked for five hours in moderate temperature with a nice breeze to clear and break up the soil on the upper part of the trail sidehill. After lunch Darcy dropped back to No-Name Gap to begin blaze painting and officially opening the previously completed lower trail switchbacks for public use. The other three of us continued clearing and breaking soil for the June workers to within twenty feet of the reroute completion on the ridge. We each put in five hours of work apiece and arrived back at our vehicles in the hilltop meadow just as rain sprinkles began for what was later to become a downpour.

We are happy to report that the soil in this upper area beyond where we left off in the official May work trip is fairly rich loam that is much easier to loosen and work with less rock and roots. It should result in our June construction moving at an easier and better pace than last trip.

So to all your BMTAers of every ability and stripe: Come on our **June 9 work trip** for what we hope will be the final No-Name Gap work trip and the final blaze painting and official opening of the trail. **Meet at 8:00 a.m. for breakfast at the Blue Ridge Village Restaurant or at 9:20 at Three Forks.**

Georgia Work Trip June 9

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If any of you readers have trail stories, gear advice, funny stories, or just a memorable trip you would like to see published in the Newsletter, please email them to

Editor@bmta.org

BMTA Webmaster: Terry Miller

Terry is the current maintainer of the BMTA website and its content. He has been supporting the website and its four previous webmasters for the last 10 years, and has done an outstanding job. In addition, he is the Board's "Go to Guy" for any computer related issues. (Thanks, Terry!)

Terry's first BMTA work trip was sometime back in mid 90's. He and his son Sean were introduced to the Benton MacKaye trail by Terry's wife's cousin, Tom Wright. They were captivated by the trail and the association fellowship and participated in several work trips every year back then until Sean started college and Terry started traveling out of town weekly for work.

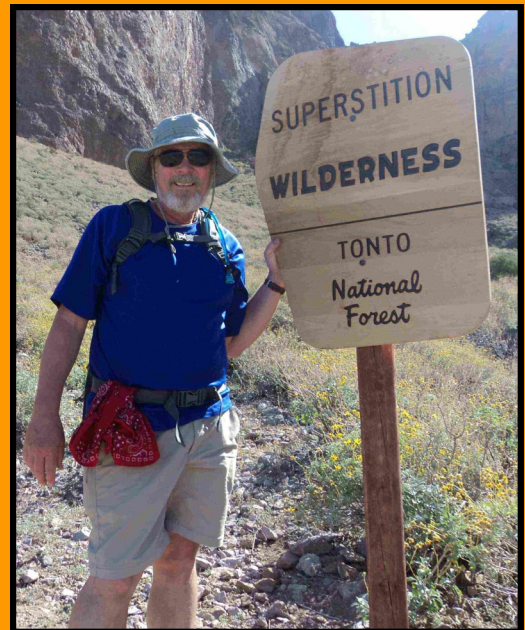
The trail was barely 90 miles long back then. "Some of our first work trips were building new trail on section 11".

Terry is also an avid birder. When not armed with a Pulaski or a fire rake Terry can usually be found behind a pair of binoculars.



BMTA Newsletter Editor: Gene Nix

Gene, our BMTA Newsletter Editor, is a retired school teacher who has taught on the junior high, high school, and college level. Gene is also a Navy veteran where he served as an air crewman aboard a P-3 Orion Submarine Hunter. Being the father of four boys, it's not uncommon to find him and those boys hiking and maintaining their section of the BMT that scales Brawley Mountain. Gene is married to Laura Huber Nix, who also holds a degree in Education and has recently received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing. They make their home in Ellijay, Georgia. When not hiking, the family enjoys sailing, canoeing, and gardening.



Editor's Note: Look for more BMTA Board Members to be featured in upcoming Newsletters. It's a great way to know your Board. By Marge Heller