



Points of Interest

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

Suspension Bridge over the Toccoa River:
 By Ralph Heller



VOLUME 29, ISSUE 11 NOVEMBER 24, 2012

Annual BMTA Meeting Deemed A Great Success...

The 32nd Annual Meeting of the BMTA was held Saturday, [November 10th](#), in Ellijay, GA. 67 people were in attendance and the new Board of Directors was elected.

The 2013 - Board includes:

- President** - David Blount
- Vice President** - Darcy Douglas
- Past President** - Dick Evans
- Treasurer** - Margaret Evans
- Secretary** - Sara Bland
- Membership** - Vic Fredlund
- Conservation** - George Owen
- Trail Construction** - Bill Hodge
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BMTA Annual Meeting ...

Outgoing President Dick Evans was recognized for his accomplishments which included converting to electronic BMTA Newsletters, expanding the offerings of BMT trail guides and maps, and establishing a physical headquarters in Blue Ridge, GA.



Named the 2012 Trail Maintainer of the Year was member Jim Holland. Jim's valuable contributions include providing chainsaw and crosscut sawyer training for BMTA members plus CPR/First Aid training. In addition, Jim maintains BMT Sections 10c and 10d.

Also receiving awards were: Liz Carter for her contributions to the BMT Georgia and TN/NC Trail Guides, Ernest Engman for the BMT Smokies Guide, Kim Hainge for the BMT Smokies Guide, and Rick Harris for his work on all 3 BMT Trail Guides (Georgia, TN/NC and Smokies). Recognized for his on-going work on BMT's Databook was Bob Ruby. Terry Miller received an award as BMTA's webmaster and Marge Heller for publicity.



President's Message ...

The Thanksgiving Holiday is almost past and it is time to change focus to the rapidly approaching Christmas Holiday. I know that you are all wondering how to combat the calories and overcome the culinary excesses that are part and parcel of these two holidays which occur a mere month apart. Wonder no more! The BMTA is stepping up to help out with multiple opportunities during the month of December for you to burn off those bothersome calories and find escape from the throngs of shoppers at your local mall.



With Forest Service approval in hand for the anticipated Dyer Gap re-route, plans have been announced for an initial route clearing trip on Wednesday, November 28. The December 8 Georgia work trip will also be dedicated to the Dyer Gap re-route. Our goal is to complete the reroute by the end of March, 2013 and it may require a number of weekday work trips in addition to regularly schedule second Saturday trips to meet this objective.

As the usual date for the monthly Tennessee/North Carolina work trip will conflict with Christmas festivities, new Maintenance Director Ernie Engman has elected to move the date up to December 1, well ahead of most holiday commitments and obligations. The work for the day will be cutting brush and downed trees in the "Heart of Darkness," the notoriously remote section between Sandy Gap and Sled Runner Gap. The current plan is to meet behind the Cherohala Skyway Visitor Center located in Tellico Plains, TN at 9:00 AM on December 1, divide into two groups, and carpool to the respective starting points. More information on the work trips for Georgia and Tennessee, as well as contact numbers for the trip leaders can be found within the attached newsletter. It is very important that you let the trip leaders know ahead of time if you plan to attend so they can have adequate supplies of tools on hand and so you can be notified of a change in location or time for the trip.

The first board meeting of 2013 will take place Saturday, January 5, at 9:00 AM in Cherry Log, Georgia. I would like to thank all those who agreed to serve on the board for next year. I would also like to thank all who came out for the annual meeting and voted on the board nominees. I look forward to working with all the members in the coming year to ensure that we continue to provide an excellent hiking trail marked and maintained to a standard we can all be proud of.

See you on the trail!

David Blount, BMTA President

Save Georgia's Hemlocks Wins 2012 Cox Conserves Hero Award!



We are delighted to announce that Donna Shearer was chosen as Atlanta's 2012 Cox Conserves Hero, and Save Georgia's Hemlocks will receive an award of \$10,000 in support of their work to save endangered hemlocks through education and charitable service. She was nominated by Benton MacKaye Trails Association Hiking Director Ralph Heller and SGH Vice Chairman Bob Pledger and selected by public on-line voting during the month of October.

Congratulations, Donna!



Hikes for 2013 ...

By Ralph Heller – Hiking Director

At the 2012 BMTA Annual Meeting, I circulated a form to get a list of members wanting to volunteer as hike leaders in 2013. Folks have signed up to lead hikes for just about every month next year, and there is a list of additional persons who have not committed to a particular month, but also want to lead hikes.

I hope to schedule an overnight trip to the Hike Inn sometime in early spring or early fall. We will have a variety of hikes, which will probably include several backpack trips as well as a drive-to group campground overnighter which will include day hike opportunities over several days. We had several weekday hikes this past year which were well attended, so we will schedule some of these also, depending on interest. Since the weather in December, January and February is not predictable for very many days in advance, I will try to arrange some hikes on short notice, based on weather forecasts. We could have some very nice hiking days during those months. Sara Bland will be leading the less strenuous Easy Trek hikes again this next year.

I will soon be contacting members who have signed up to lead hikes to start planning hike details. It is not too late to sign up to lead a hike, and we can always use co-leaders.

We would like to schedule a majority of our hikes on the BMT, but they can also be on other trails. I am open to all suggestions. Call me at 770-235-9760. Also, if you plan to go on one of our hikes, please contact the published hike leader found on the Activities section of the web site or in the newsletter. At that time you will be given the meeting location and meeting time. We need to know who is coming so, that we can contact those persons in case plans change.

Look for the most up-to-date info on hikes in the Activities Section of our web site.



EASY TREKKERS HALLOWEEN HIKE...

Wednesday, October 31, 2012

By Sara Bland

Ghosts and goblins were hovering over the Ingle's Parking Lot as the Easy Trekkers assembled on a spooky Halloween morning. Never mind the spooks...there was some wind and a bit of chill in the air but it didn't stop us.

Fourteen brave hikers struck out to our destination to Brawley Mountain Firetower. Easy Trekkers led by Ralph Heller included: Jerry & Sara

Bland, Hank Baudet, Scott Barker, Chris Curtin, Frank & Joy Forehand, Marge Heller, Walter Polk, Nancy Sauls, Clayton Webster, Mark & Kathy Yost.

The day was promising good weather as we traveled from Morganton on GA 60 to where the Benton MacKaye Trailhead crosses the road at Wilscot Gap. The autumn air was crisp and the sun was out as we trampled through the leaves to reach the top.

It was worth the trip when we reached the site of the old firetower as it provided us with a scenic and sunny spot for a leisurely lunch. The firetower has long become obsolete for the purpose of watching for wildfires. It is now used to attach radio, TV, and cell transmitters. This has changed its look from that of a lonesome outpost to a mega-voltage superstructure.

After lunch, we began our trek down to complete our 6-mile hike. As usual, it was a great day of camaraderie and outdoor fun. Walter and Mark captured many memories of the day with their cameras. We welcomed new Trekkers: Scott Barker, Joy and Frank Forehand and Clayton Webster. I think we all look forward to our next hike together!



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EASY TREKKERS HALLOWEEN HIKE...

Wednesday, October 31, 2012



The Barker Brothers Band ...

If you are looking for a unique December hiking destination, then why not make it the Hike Inn? The Barker Brothers Band will be providing the entertainment on December 21st and 22nd, and evening guests will have an opportunity to hear the distinctive sounds of bluegrass music in an up-close and personal setting. A family band originating in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, the Barker Brothers incorporate an eclectic mix of hard driving bluegrass, Americana, and folk music. The Barkers invite you to join them as they take their music off the beaten path. (www.barkerbrothers.com)



Scott & Angie Barker are new BMTA members. Scott attended our Halloween Hike and was told about the BMTA by Travis Crouch of North Georgia Mountain Outfitters in Ellijay. Thanks, Travis!

TN/NC BMTA Section Maintenance...Nov 2, 16, & 17

Friday, November 2, 2012 - BMT Section 12a - US64 to Kimsey Hwy - Section maintainer Nathan McKee was able to hike/clear his trail section on Friday. There was surprisingly little to clean up and he hiked fast, so he was able to do the work in 3.5 hours.

Name	Travel Hours	Work Hours	Totals
Nathan McKee	2	3.5	5.5

Friday, November 16, 2012 - BMT Section 13e - Towee to Coker Creek - Tom Smith and Zoe Zardis logged out this section, removing 8 trees from the trail corridor. Afterwards Zoe logged out the section from TN68 up to the motorcycle trail, section 14b, removing several small trees with a hand saw.

Name	Travel Hours	Work Hours	Totals
Tom Smith	1	4	5
Zoe Zardis	1.5	7	8.5
Totals	2.5	11	13.5

Saturday, November 17, 2012 - BMT Section 14b - TN68 to the Motorcycle Trail - Zoe Zardis worked on the half mile stretch from TN68 to the Motorcycle Trail throwing off branches and brushing out the section.

Name	Travel Hours	Work Hours	Totals
Zoe Zartis	0.5	2	2.5

TN/NC BMTA: Heart Of Darkness WorkTrip ...

By Darcy Douglas

A work trip is scheduled for the Heart of Darkness on December the 1st. Please contact Ernie at his cell number, [865-924-5992](tel:865-924-5992). He is working a super long week, so just leave a message and he'll get back to you with details for meeting.



Hopes are to have about 10 people so we can divide into two teams and run brush cutters from both ends (Sandy Gap and Sled Runner Gap) and have some folks to swap out when arms get tired, as well as have a chainsaw with a swamper on both teams. Sounds like a great trip for some intrepid maintainers!!!!



Georgia Work Held On November 3...

By Tom Keene

The Georgia Work Trip was held this month on November 3. The crew built and refreshed water diversions in the vicinity of the trail relocation near No Name Gap on Section 2.



Left to right: George Owen, Ernest Arvensen, Ralph Heller, Doug Kleiber, Linda Hinson, Mona Street, Walt Cook. Photo by Tom Keene.

Georgia Work-Trip Scheduled for December 8 ...

We have just received final Forest Service approval to proceed with the long-awaited Dyer Gap reroute. Meeting details are below. Plan to joins us. A day in the Cohuttas is better than shopping! First-timers warmly welcome.

Look here: <http://www.bmta.org/pdfs/WorktripsWhatToExpect-revSep2011.pdf>

December 8 – We will work on the just-approved reroute between Flat Top Mountain and Dyer Gap. The reroute will move the trail off the road-walk on 64A heading southbound out of Dyer. Plenty of side-hilling to keep you warm if the weather turns cold. We will meet at the Village Restaurant in Blue Ridge at 8:00 AM and at the trailhead at Dyer Gap at 9:20 AM. The trip leaders are Tom Keene (cell) 770-548-4935; and George Owen (home) 706-374-4716, or (cell) 706-897-3366.

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Tom Keene
Georgia Maintenance Director
Benton MacKaye Trail



Crosscut Saw Certification Class...



Conasauga Ranger District will host a Crosscut Saw Certification/Traditional Tools Workshop on November 30th-December 1st. Traditional tools, (crosscut saws, axes, swing blades, etc) are required to work Wilderness Trails. Topics include the history and tradition of crosscut saws, types of saws and maintenance, basic saw filing, axe sharpening and maintenance, using crosscut saws and axes to clear trail, and safety issues.



This class is open to both new certifications and recertifications. The classroom work will be held at the Conasauga Ranger District Office on Friday, November 30th. The field work will be held on Saturday, December 1st.

Please forward to your organizations and have interested attendees contact me if they would like to attend.

Regards, Jim
Richard T. "Jim" Holland
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(706) 258-2830
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Callsign KI4BEN



First Board Meeting Announced...

David Blount, newly elected president for the upcoming year, announced to all board members that the first meeting of the year will be held on January 5, 2013. The budget and yearly schedule will be first priority. Special projects, publicity opportunities, fun hikes, and National Trail Day will be just a few of the other topics discussed by the newly elected board.



Spreading The Word On The BMT...

John Nix and his father, both BMTA members and trail maintainers, recently returned from a hiking trip at the Grand Canyon. John has been an avid hiker from the age of six and his father throughout his life. Both have always been interested in hiking the Grand Canyon. John and his father spent October 8th through the 12th backpacking from the South Rim of the canyon to the inner gorge. They hiked the Bright Angel Trail,



9.3 miles, on their first day out and camped on the banks of the Colorado River. The second day was spent hiking to Indian Gardens, an oasis within the gorge, where they camped for their second night. The third day included a hike of over 7 miles and an upward elevation climb of almost a mile to reach the top of the South Rim. The pair also hiked a few miles of the South Kaibab and the Hermit Rest Trails. Both of these trails are also located within the Grand Canyon. They also had time for sightseeing and enjoying some Native American food. John says his most memorable experience was looking over the edge of the canyon, seeing condors fly overhead and wading in the Colorado River while watching elk graze. Both agreed that this was a hike of a lifetime.



Providing Kids an Outdoor Experience

By Ralph Artigliere, BMTA Member



Providing Kids an Outdoor Experience

by Ralph Artigliere

Organizations like the Benton-MacKaye Trail Association and Trout Unlimited continue to suffer from age-creep. Look around at our meetings and volunteer activities: the gray-hairs prevail in numbers and in ability to serve the organization. Recruiting younger members who actively participate is challenging. That's not surprising. Most 20-30- and 40-somethings are preoccupied with work and raising families. Most parents are focused on their kids' busy schedules, activities, and interests. On top of that, we live in an immediate gratification digital age in which there is fierce competition for recreational time for anyone below the age of retirement. Organized sports, digital media, computer games, and television swallow up the opportunity for children and a growing generation of young adults to experience the outdoors and commune with nature. Given this changing culture, how can we cultivate the next generations of forest volunteers and conservationists? Most importantly, children should see and experience wilderness areas and develop an appreciation for their natural surroundings for their own health and well-being. It is incumbent upon parents, teachers, and youth leaders to find ways to maximize the quality of the time kids spend outdoors. One way to do that is to plan a straightforward, fun, and enriching hike in the woods. How can we help that happen?



Wilderness hikes that are unstructured, yet supplemented by hands-on experience and fun information, are going to be most enjoyable for kids. Picture a walk on wilderness trails along and across pristine mountain streams, armed with ready information on the natural wonders observed on the trail.



Alternatively, imagine a hike that is a trudge, slog, or bore. As a kid, would you rather be on a hike or on a slog? Planning is



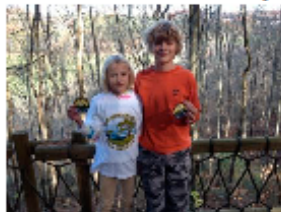
the key. Where can adults readily find a location and the necessary information for a quality wilderness hiking experience for kids? With is question in mind, volunteers from Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited envisioned and developed the [Trout Adventure Trail](#)® in partnership with the US Forest Service. In its simplest form, the [Trout Adventure Trail](#)® identifies a special place where kids and their parents, teachers, or youth group leaders can hike

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Providing Kids an Outdoor Experience ...

together and learn a little bit about the beautiful and wondrous places in which trout thrive. To help plan the experience, we created a handy [website](#) with information on where to go, how to get there, and the types of experiences available on different routes. Using the website, it is possible to plan a hike accounting for distance, degree of hiking difficulty, and observational opportunities along the way and to obtain supplementary educational information to enhance the experience. The location at the AT and BMT between Springer Mountain and Long Creek Falls presents is ideal. Depending on the route selected, hikers can experience portions of the storied Appalachian and Benton MacKaye Trails, trout streams, a waterfall, and magnificent views.

The [TroutAdventureTrail.org](#) website contains trail-related educational materials about trout, trout habitat, watersheds, flora and fauna, and many outdoor-related subjects such as forestry, following a trail, and Leave No Trace. There are handy links to more detailed information on subjects that pique the interest of hikers or



their adult mentors. Scout leaders and parents will appreciate this program, as the activities fit within achievement and experience objectives for scouts of all ages. However, the Trout Adventure Trail is available to any



parent and their children, schools, summer camps, day camps, home school parents, and other youth organizations. All children and adults who hike the trails with them are eligible for the [free commemorative patch](#) available at convenient places in Blue Ridge, Blairsville, Ellijay, and Dahlonega.

Members of Trout Unlimited and the Benton-MacKaye Trail Association share a love of the outdoors and a commitment to wilderness and conservation education of our next generations. We hope our trout trail, designated on the magnificent facilities provided by your volunteers and those of the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club will help with those goals.



The Trout Adventure Trail® officially opened in November, 2012. Go to [TroutAdventureTrail.org](#) and bring the outdoor experience to a child today.