

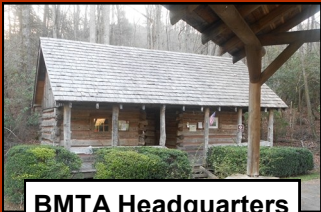


Points of Interest

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BMTA Headquarters



VOLUME 30, ISSUE 7

JULY 27, 2013

BMTA Member...Ron Tipton Chosen ATC New Executive Director

By George Owen

Long-time BMTA member and activist Ron Tipton has just been named the executive director of the national Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) on July 12.

The ATC oversees the Appalachian Trail (AT) – the world’s most famous footpath – in its 2,180-mile length through 14 states. Its staff headquarters is in Harpers Ferry, WV.

Ron has a long history with both the Appalachian Trail and the Benton MacKaye Trail Association as

he has served the past 35 years as an advocate for public land preservation through leadership in major conservation/environmental organizations. While living in Atlanta during the 1980s working as regional director for The Wilderness Society, Ron both served on the BMTA board and spent various work Saturdays helping to construct the Benton MacKaye Trail across Georgia. Upon subsequently leaving Georgia he has continued to this day to be a BMTA member.

His involvement over more recent years with the Appalachian Trail was initiated in 1978 when he hiked the entire trail in a few months. His AT-related involvement since then has included life membership and section maintainer for the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club and serving for a period on the board of the ATC.



Continued On Next Page

Ron has spent the last 14 years as senior vice president for the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), which has over 400,000 members nationwide. A graduate of George Washington University with an undergraduate degree in American Studies and a law degree from GW's National Law Center, he subsequently worked as a program officer at the National Academy of Sciences and on the oversight/investigative staff of the U.S. Congressional House Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee. He then became the national parks program director for The Wilderness Society, and was the Society's southeast regional director several years in Atlanta. He played a significant role in securing wilderness designation for national forest land in Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama and worked to protect the Appalachian Trail in the southern Appalachians from clear cutting, road construction, and adjacent land development.

After The Wilderness Society, Ron served as vice president for the National Audubon Society, then spent five years with the World Wildlife Fund's U.S. program. In 2000 he became the Senior Vice President for Programs of NPCA, and from 2008 until now NPCA Senior VP for Policy.

Ron has been married for 33 years to Rita Molyneaux and has a son who is a firefighter. He and Rita reside in Rockville, MD. He is the recent past president of the Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington, a regional social services and counseling program supported by Episcopal parishes in the DC metro area.

Our BMTA faithful member has remained a close friend to several of us long-time BMTA members, including three former presidents. Some of us in BMTA are part of a group that has hiked with Ron on a nearly annual basis for more than thirty years.



Trout Adventure Trail Hike a Big Success

More than fifty determined hikers and volunteers from age three to “retirement age” braved a rainy Saturday on the Trout Adventure Trail on July 6 and were rewarded with rollicking streams and thunderous waterfalls while observing the Chattahoochee National Forest at its virtual capacity for water. Falling rain failed to dampen enthusiasm, as hikers selected either a 5 mile route from Big Stamp Gap to Three Forks or a 2.2 mile trek from Three Forks to Long Creek Falls and back before assembling to eat lunch and hear expert speakers discuss the habitat along the hiking routes. The rain thankfully abated in time for lunch and the informational parts of the program.



Jim Wentworth (with scissors) flanked by Ralph Artigliere (L) and Ralph Heller © ...cuts ceremonial ribbon at Three Forks

The event was a hike and outdoor “lunch and learn” jointly sponsored by Trout Unlimited and the Benton MacKaye Trail Association at the Trout Adventure Trail, which is a joint project of Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited and the US Forest Service. The Trout Adventure Trail uses existing Appalachian Trail and Benton MacKaye Trail routes from Springer Mountain to Long Creek Falls and supplements the experience with online information about trout habitat and related environmental issues at TroutAdventure-Trail.org. Any adult or child who hikes on the Trout Adventure Trail qualifies for a distinctive free patch provided by Trout Unlimited. The July 6 hike had the dual purpose of introducing a substantial number of hikers to the trail and marking this year’s official opening of the Trail with a ribbon cutting ceremony. “I was pleasantly surprised when every hiker stayed to the very end for the lessons and for the ribbon cutting, despite wet conditions and wet clothes. Their interest and attention to the important issues facing our forest land and streams was heart-warming to me as a volunteer for TU,” said Carl Riggs, local TU Chapter President.

The morning started with the hikes. After caravanning to the start at Big Stamp Gap, 21 hikers were led in two groups by Ralph Heller of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association and Jim Wentworth, Wildlife Biologist with the US Forest Service on the five mile hike along segments of the Benton MacKaye and Appalachian Trails to Three Forks. Hikers made several stream crossings over three different trout streams, only three of which were improved with wooden bridges. This meant getting feet wet in fast-moving water under the guidance of the hike leaders, which was a new wilderness experience for many of the hikers. Other highlights included stands of magnificent hemlock trees and stream structures for native Brook Trout in Stover Creek created by the Forest Service with the help of Trout Unlimited volunteers.

The second hike was a 2.2 mile round trip from Three Forks to Long Creek Falls along a trout stream on the Appalachian and Benton MacKaye Trail. Thirty hikers led by Ralph Artigliere, who is a member of both TU and the Benton MacKaye Trail Association, observed watershed components, a trout stream, and a series of waterfalls running at beautiful capacity. Trees, shrubs, flowers, and plants in the area are gorged with water these days, rendering an eerie and beautiful primeval feel to the hike. Streams along both routes remained fairly clear despite many days of rain because they are so high in the watershed.



Crossing Stover Creek

At the end of the hikes, Trout Unlimited volunteers served lunch to the hikers and gathered everyone for talks by Darcy Douglas on Adopt-a-Stream water quality and bug surveys conducted by the Benton MacKaye Trail Association; Jim Wentworth on native and introduced trout species in the area and their habitat; Fred Ruppel of Gold Rush TU in Dahlonega about Brook Trout stream structure work on Stover Creek; and Donna Shearer of Save Georgia's Hemlocks, on the threat of the wooly adelgid to hemlock trees and what volunteers and the Forest Service are doing about it. After the learning component, the group gathered at the wooden bridge at Three Forks where Jim Wentworth ceremonially cut a blue ribbon signifying the opening of the Trout Adventure Trail, which is in its first full year of operation.



Jim Wentworth presents at "lunch and learn"

Hikers enjoyed the experience on July 6 as evidenced by their smiles and expressions of appreciation to the organizers. Anyone who wants to hike the Trout Adventure Trail on their own can go to the website and learn how to get there, how to choose a route, what to see and learn, and where to get their free patch. Patches and information are also available at both Fannin and Gilmer Chambers of Commerce, the US Forest Service office in Blairsville, North Georgia Mountain Outfitters in Ellijay, and Blue Ridge Mountain Outfitters in Blue Ridge.

Text provided by Ralph Artigliere, organizer and volunteer at the event: skywayra@tds.net

Comments and Benton MacKaye information: Ralph Heller- rshbmta@gmail.com

Comments and information: Jim Wentworth- jwentworth@fs.fed.us

Photos and descriptions provided separately

Upcoming Hikes...Ralph Heller: Hiking Director

By Ralph Heller

We are featuring two hikes in August. Both are more challenging than our Easy Trek hikes, due to their length and the mid-summer heat.

Sunday August 11: Hike from Watson Gap to Dally Gap and back. This hike will be approximately 7.5 miles round trip. The difficulty level is moderate/strenuous due to length, but there is not a large altitude change. Drink plenty of water before hike to hydrate in advance and bring plenty of water during hike. Mostly shaded hike is largely in the Cohutta Wilderness and will include creeks and possibly beavers. Group size limited to 12 hikers due to wilderness restrictions.

Pre-register for meeting time and location by calling Hike Leader, Darcy Douglas at 404-497-0818 or email bmtadarcy@yahoo.com

Saturday August 24: Hike to Emery Creek Falls. This five mile hike in and out is very scenic along Emery Creek, deep in the Cohuttas and includes 2 waterfalls. The first falls is 40-50 ft. high and the second is about 25 ft. high. About 12 stream crossings are involved. Bring hiking poles for stability when crossing the stream and sturdy shoes that you don't mind getting wet. This hike should stay fairly cool along the creek. There is not a lot of elevation gain, but hike does have some rough footing, as the trail climbs over some large boulders.

Pre-register for meeting time by contacting Hike leaders Pam and Richard Sullivan at pams11@tds.net (preferred) or 706-374-5281. Meet at the Home Depot in Blue Ridge.



Holy fungus among us! Did all the rain cause that pulaski to grow there also?

BMTA Work Trip... Trail Re-Route Near Beech Gap...

BMTA Work Trip - Dig new trail near Beech Gap - Friday, August 9, 2013 - We have now moved the bridge over the "Grand Canyon" on the Benton MacKaye Trail to a stable position between Beech Gap and the Unicoi Crest Overlook along the Cherohala Skyway. It is now 50 feet or so downhill from the old position. We now need to dig about a tenth of a mile of new sidehill tread to access the new bridge. So we will need people to work with pulaskis, hoes, and picks as well as fire rakes, McLeods, loppers and chain saws.



Meet us at the Unicoi Crest Overlook on the Skyway, which is about 0.25 miles into North Carolina from the TN/NC state line, at 9 AM. If you arrive late, just hike north on the BMT toward Beech Gap and you will find us. It is only a short hike into where we will be doing the work. Lunch will be provided by the BMTA. It does not matter what your level of experience is, we can use you. And you can learn how new trail is built and how much effort it takes to make good trail.

Bring gloves, helmet, eye protection if you have them and wear long pants. Bring plenty of water as well. And insect repellent and suntan lotion might be good to have.

If you have questions, contact Rick Harris ...

at 423-253-6358 (home) or 513-260-1184 (cell) or HarrisRi@aol.com.

Save This Date...
BMTA Annual Meeting
Ellijay, Georgia
November 2, 2013

November 2013						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Georgia Work-trip...August 10

Georgia Worktrip

Avoid the Back to School Shopping -

Spend a day in the Woods!

Join us by the Falls Branch falls. Lots of shade and the cooling falls. Should be a treat!



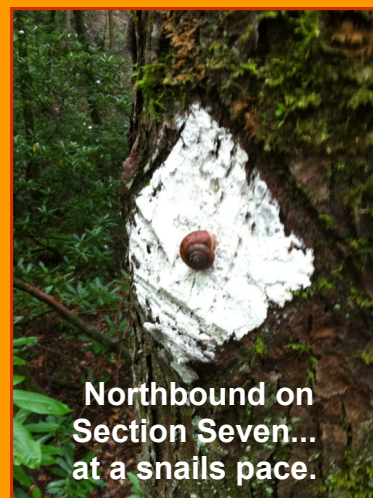
Details below. Join us if you can!

Aug. 10 -- Georgia Work Trip at the Falls Branch (section 6b). We will revitalize water diversions on the heavily used approach to the Falls Branch waterfall as well as further along on section 6b. We will be working adjacent to one of the prettier waterfalls in North Georgia; a photo of the Falls Branch falls appears on the cover of Tim Homan's *Hiking the Benton MacKaye Trail*. We meet for breakfast at the L&A Corner (store&restaurant) across from the Pink Pig in Cherrylog at 8AM. Or meet at the Falls Branch trailhead at 9:00 AM. Trip leader is Tom Keene – 770-548-4935.

First-time volunteers are most welcome. For what to expect, bring, wear, etc. check here:

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

Tom Keene
Georgia Maintenance Director
Benton MacKaye Trail



Northbound on
Section Seven...
at a snails pace.

Georgia BMTA Maintainers ...

Georgia BMTA Maintainers,

Greetings to all, And thanks for all you do for the BMT in Georgia.

On recent worktrips we have been working on, and had questions about, water diversions - nicks, dips, grade reversals, etc. Below is the url for the Forest Service's excellent handbook on Trail Construction and Maintenance. It's actually quite well written - a good read. THE BMTA does not follow USFS guidelines on every particular but we do on the major stuff, so this handbook is right on target.

Some portions of the handbook are concerned with designing new trail, interesting but not of immediate interest for our worktrips -- or for maintaining your section. But other sections are focused on maintenance - right up our alley.

Given all the rain we have had this summer, I would particularly call your attention to the section beginning on page 29, titled "Surface Water Control."

Anyway, below is the url. It takes a few minutes to download the pdf version which you can either print or save. For your convenience my saved version is attached.

<http://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/pubs/pdfpubs/pdf07232806/pdf07232806dpi72.pdf>

Happy Trails!

TK

--

Tom Keene
Georgia Maintenance Director
Benton MacKaye Trail





Leaving A Footpath For Generations To Follow



By Marge Heller

BMTA Board Member Bob Ruby is an avid hiker and enjoys sharing his love of the trail with his two grandchildren, Elizabeth and John Banzhaf, by taking them on overnight hiking and camping trips.

This photo was taken at BMTA's Trail Town event on April 13. in Blue Ridge, GA . Immediately afterwards, Bob took Elizabeth and John on a 5-mile trek to the Hike Inn. at Amicalola Falls State Park, where Bob gave a power point presentation on the Benton MacKaye Trail to the Hike Inn guests.



John, Bob, and Elizabeth

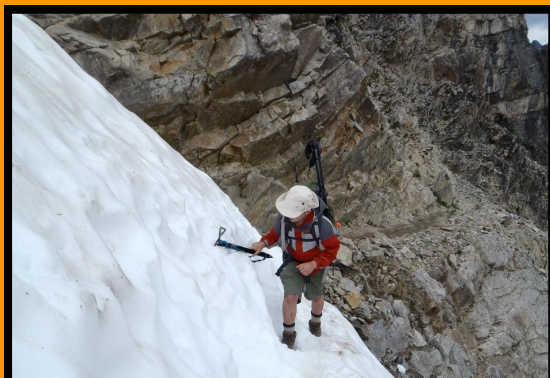
By Gene Nix

John Nix, and his father Gene Nix, recently returned from a backpacking trip in the Grand Tetons. John and his father are both BMTA members. While there, John and his father spent one day visiting Jackson Hole, Wyoming, 1 day hiking the Grand Tetons Lake loop, which included a 7 ½ mile hike around Jenny, Leigh, and String Lakes and a 22 mile hike over Paintbrush Divide.

They most enjoyed seeing Lake Solitude and waking up to three large moose at the door of their tent. Hiking to an altitude of 10,700 feet, they had the opportunity to hike over several snow fields and climb Paintbrush Divide using an ice axe. Overall, the most memorable experience was when they summited Paintbrush Divide and were able to have a 360 degree view of the Teton Mountain Range.



John At The Summit Of Paintbrush Divide



Crossing A Snow Shelf



Lake Solitude In The Background

Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest... A Hike Through...

By Gene Nix

Walter Polk and his family from Baton Rouge, Louisiana recently hiked in the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest in Graham County, North Carolina. He shared some fabulous photos of their hike in which I'd like to share with our members.



The **Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest** is an approximately 3,800-acre tract of publicly owned virgin forest in Graham County, North Carolina, named in memory of poet Joyce Kilmer (1886–1918), best known for his poem "Trees". One of the largest contiguous tracts of old growth forest in the Eastern United States, the area is administered by the U. S. Forest Service. The memorial forest is a popular family hiking destination and features an easy two-mile, figure-eight trail that includes a memorial plaque at the juncture of the two loops. In 1975 the memorial forest was joined with a much larger tract of the Nantahala National Forest to become part of the Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness.



IMPORTANT BACKCOUNTRY INFORMATION

CLOSED DUE TO BEAR ACTIVITY

Shelters:

Campsites: 24, 47

CAUTION! BEAR ACTIVITY IN THESE AREAS

Campsites:

Shelters: Ice Water Springs

Trails: Laurel Falls Trail, Abrams Creek Trail, and Anthony's Creek Trail

The following TRAILS are CLOSED:

- Scott Mountain, from site 6 to Schoolhouse Gap (site 6 open)
- Big Creek, from Walnut Bottoms to Mouse Creek Falls
- Chimney Tops Trail closed Monday thru Thursdays

The following CAMPSITES are CLOSED: 11, 24, 47

Christine Hoyer
Volunteer Coordinator
Great Smoky Mountains National Park
107 Park Headquarters Road
Gatlinburg, TN 37738

865-436-1265 (office)
865-436-1204 (fax)
christine_hoyer@nps.gov



Leave No Trace ~ Trainer Course



SOUTHEASTERN FOOT TRAILS COALITION

Presents

Leave No Trace ~ Trainer Course

August 2- 4, 2013

News Release

The Southeastern Foot Trails Coalition will be conducting a Leave No Trace Trainer Course for those seeking to learn the seven principles of outdoor ethics for personal enrichment or to teach others. The course features a short backpack and overnight campout in the Chattahoochee National Forest. The course fee includes food and educational materials.

The Trainer Course is a vital component of the nationwide Leave No Trace program, to help recreationalists minimize their ecological impact while enjoying the outdoors. The Trainer Course assists the participants in learning more about the seven principles of Leave No Trace and techniques for disseminating these low impact skills to others.

The goals for this Trainer Course are to prepare the attendees so they will understand and be able to teach the value of minimal impact on the environment and the Leave No Trace Ethics.

Date: August 2-4, 2013 (soft start on Friday)

Time: 9:00 am Saturday to 4:00pm Sunday

Cost: \$85.00/ including materials

Place: Chattahoochee National Forest

Presenter: Jay M Dement, Leave No Trace Master Educator

More information: <http://southeastfoottrails.org/SEFTC-LNT-Workshop.htm>
jay@jayDphotos.com, 404/731-1901

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