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BMTA Headquarters



Memorial Hike honoring Betty Petty held March 15, 2014

By Darcy Douglas

One of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association's esteemed Past Presidents was killed in a tragic accident just before Christmas, 2013. As we have done in the past, we decided to have a memorial work trip/hike to pay our respects to her, on the section of the BMT she so faithfully maintained. We joined with other clubs and her family members for the events of the day.

The morning of Saturday, March 15, a group of 15 met at Pheasant Fields parking area, the northern end of her section of trail. After signing in, distributing tools, and meeting one another, the group of Betty's friends from the Chattanooga Hiking Club and the BMTA headed uphill.





We stopped at the agreed upon spot for a time of sharing and remembering. Some funny stories and some just plain “Betty stories” were shared. There was much nodding of heads and laughter. We all knew Betty in our own ways, so most of us learned something else about her. She kept exotic chickens and goats, as well as her beloved dogs. She was an excellent classical pianist. She was quite the photographer. She was Valedictorian of her high school class. She was a strong supporter of the trail views of the Corridor K project in Tennessee. And, she loved candy. She brought chocolates. We each took one, opened them, then toasted the lady we all admired and liked so much! Since the Dove candies had little sayings in

them, we had to share those, too. There were tears, and there was silence, but it all was in respect for this wonderful woman who graced the trail world with her presence and her generous donations of time and energy. She will be missed!

We worked our way up the trail to just past the spring to share our lunches and more stories. A good bit of clearing was done, places where turns in the trail were confusing were better marked, and trash was picked up and taken out. In the interest of time, we headed downhill to be back at the cars by 3:00. I had made a carrot cake for all to share. Guess it was good – not only was every piece eaten, but someone licked the pan!!!! (someone you wouldn't suspect!)

We headed back to Tellico Plains and met Betty's closest relative, her cousin Johnanna with husband Tom. There was more sharing of stories, tears, and much laughter during our meal. They are a delightful couple, and we definitely enjoyed getting to know one another. Betty's life certainly touched many people in many ways.

The Chattanooga Hiking Club is collecting donations in Betty's name for a granite or marble memorial bench in the Chattanooga Nature Center property. Since the BMTA doesn't put memorials on Federal Land, this would be the best way to remember Betty in a physical manner. Please send any donations you would like to the Chattanooga Hiking Club, P.O. Box 24834, Chattanooga, TN 37422.

Those present included: David Blount, Donald Bodley, Donald Box, Gwen Brimer, Robert Butterfield, Cheryl Carico, Darcy Douglas, Rick and Brenda Harris, Jane and Tom Keene, George Owen, Beth Peters, Boe Rudder, and Ralph Van Pelt. Johnanna and Tom Hunt met us for dinner.



Nominating Committee Appointed

The nominations committee will be working over the next few months to propose a slate of nominees for 2014-2015 Board of Directors. The committee includes Chairperson and current VP Darcy Douglas, TN/NC State Rep Rick Harris, Publicity Director Marge Heller, and GA Maintenance Director Tom Keene. If contacted by a member of this committee, please give due consideration to serving the Association by accepting a nomination for a seat on the board. If you would like to serve in this capacity or would be interested in serving on a committee, should the opportunity arise, please contact one of the above named directly or send a message through the Contact Us link on the BMTA website.



The Nominations Committee will complete their work by summer's end; the Bylaws require that a 60 day notice be given to the membership. The resulting slate of nominees will be voted on at the Annual Meeting of the Association on October 18, 2014. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor at the October Meeting. I would like to thank the committee members for their willingness to serve and all board members, past and present, for their service to the Association.

David Blount, President BMTA

THRU: An Appalachian Trail Love Story, is available at
www.Amazon.com

Richard Judy, president of the board which runs the Hike Inn, is the author and has agreed to donate all proceeds from his book to the AT Museum. He briefly describes his book as follows:

THRU: An Appalachian Trail Love Story, combines the people and places I've encountered over more than a half-century of hiking on trails across America. It is an authentic slice of the grit and wackiness that embodies the crazy dream of walking unbathed and unshaved in mountains for months at a time. All this time on the trail has led me to share my memories to financially benefit the publisher, the Appalachian Trail Museum at Pine Grove Furnace State Park, Pennsylvania. Please read *THRU* and enjoy the antics of Captain Stupid, Momma Llama and their friends as they work their way NOBO to Katahdin.

April 12 ... Georgia Work-trip Big Frog Wilderness Adventure

By Barry Allen

Section 11C, Fork Ridge Trail -- Cohutta/Big Frog Wilderness, Tennessee

The Cohutta/Big Frog Wilderness area of Tennessee is a truly remarkable part of our trail, one that I did not fully appreciate until walking the area prior to our April work trip. Two and a half hours into my day trip, I had seen a pileated woodpecker come up from the forest floor almost at my feet. In my mind, I thought of the now extinct Ivory Billed Woodpecker, and its colloquial name, "The Lord God Bird." After seeing the pileated so close and so personal, all I could think was, "Lord God what a creature".

Shortly after startling the pileated, and while crossing a large blow down on Fork Ridge, I heard a tremendous crashing noise below and to my right. Without looking, I knew immediately I had startled a bear. When I spotted him at perhaps 60 or 70 yards, he was going full out through a forest still bare, with few signs of spring. What a beautiful, night black bruin; and the best thing was, he was running at full speed AWAY from me.



From left to right: Connor Bayliss, Steve Bayliss, Keith Truppi, Phil Guhl, David Dunn, Barry Allen, and Ralph Heller
Kneeling, Frank Forehand and Robert Collins. Behind the camera, Darcy Douglas

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On our April 12th work trip, I was privileged to have a group of individuals who came prepared and knew what to expect. In the course of the day, our group of 10 dedicated people covered almost eight miles of hiking into and out of section 11c plus another mile of trail work on Fork Ridge. Including clean up and scouting time, we had 80 man hours of work on 11c. We made a difference!!

We began the day at the campground, with a brief safety meeting and a description of what to expect

for the day. Water was the number one issue; bring plenty and drink often! From the campground, we drove to the intersection of FS 45 and FS 221, took a right and parked in the area designated for the Big Frog Trail. From the parking area, our group headed off down the Big Frog, with relatively easy hiking to the junction of Big Frog and Rough Creek Trails. At this intersection, Robert Collins and David Dunn split from the main work crew, staying on Big Frog for another couple of miles, until hitting the Big Frog/Fork Ridge. The main crew stepped off Big Frog onto the Rough Creek Trail, followed this to its conjunction with the BMT and then worked Rough Creek/BMT up to the Fork Ridge Trail. Our two groups then worked towards each other on the two mile path of Fork Ridge/BMT, Robert and David focused on brush and tree removal, the rest of us working on tread improvement. With at least a four hour round trip hike, our work time had to be held to 3 to 3.5 hours. So, alas, we did not finish; it will still be there for next month!

April's trip was a hard trip; May's trip will be equally as tough. Sugar coating this type of work trip is not productive. But I need another solid day of work on 11c from a group as dedicated as the one that went out in April. I hope to see you there. And bring plenty of water, because we'll sweat it out of you.

My thanks go out to Darcy Douglas who served as our Co-Leader for the day, Connor and Steve Bayliss (an exceptional father and son combination, who just proved to me again how small a world it really is), Keith Truppi, Phil Guhl, Frank Forehand, and Ralph Heller plus the aforementioned David Dunn and Robert Collins. You guys all made a difference. We couldn't keep the trail looking as it does without this kind of dedication.



May 10 Georgia (+ Section 11) Work-trip Big Frog Wilderness Adventure Work-trip, Part II Finish the Job!

One more time into the Wilderness!

We will mainly work refreshing side-hilling on the Fork Ridge Trail (Section 11c) but will do a little swing-blade work.

Reminder, this won't be a regular Georgia work-trip: it will more strenuous than usual, and a bit of an adventure! The Cohutta/Big Frog is the largest wilderness east of the Mississippi. Walking to and from the worksite will be a MAJORITY of the day. The walk in from the trailhead to the work area will take about 2 hours.



Bring **plenty** of water – at least TWO LITERS. You will need it for 4-5 hours walking, plus side-hilling.

Meeting information: The Breakfast meeting will be at 8:00 the McDonalds at the corner of Hwy 515/ US76 and GA 5 (to McCaysville). Departure for the trailhead will be at 8:25am sharp. Trailhead meeting will be at 9:00 am at the Thunder Rock Campground at Power Station #3 just west of the Olympic Whitewater Center. Meet in the campground parking lot accessed by a road just behind the Powerhouse. The entire group will depart ASAP after 9:00 for the short (12-15 min) drive to the Deep Gap trailhead parking area off FS221. The aim is to be back in Blue Ridge by 5:00pm.

Trip Leader is Barry Allen. **PLEASE (!) let Barry know if you expect to be with us.**
barry.w.allen AT att.net or 770-294-7384.

See you there!

--

Tom Keene
Georgia Maintenance Director
Benton MacKaye Trail

Tellico Work Trip ... Thursday, April 3 Indian Boundary Campground Cleanup

By Rich Harris

On April 3, the Tellico Trail Maintainers had their annual IBRA clean up day which coincided with their monthly safety meeting where they went over JHA's and other business. They meet at the main campground.



Projects included:

- Leaf blowing
- Cleaning fee station and bulletin boards
- Clean restrooms with engine
- Clean trash cans (with bleach and water)
- Painting fee stations
- Picking up trash in and around campsites and roads
- Buck up trees that have been cut along with stacking wood and hauling some to host sites
- And a various assortment of fun and exciting things to do!

For lunch, they fixed hot dogs and had simple side dishes. Lunch was at the pavilion.

Blazing Completed

April 11, 2014

Blazing of the section from Pheasant Fields to Sugar Mountain, previously maintained by Betty Petty, currently maintained by Ralph Van Pelt was completed.

Participants: Darcy Douglas, Gilbert Treadwell, Rick Harris

Yellow Creek Reroute Project Update

We had a great week with the Sierra Club Workers in April clearing trail from Green Gap on the Yellow Creek Ridge down to Fontana Village, plus Rick Harris and I checked out the best route from the Village to the connection with the Appalachian Trail near Fontana Marina. Gary Bryant was able to help us for the first part of the week, and we were able to rework the tread in the most critical part of that trail.



On [April 4th](#), members of the Benton MacKaye Board of Directors were able to hike the western-most 1.8 miles of the reroute from Old Field Gap Road down to Meadow Branch Road, and all loved the views along this section.

On [April 11th](#), Ernie Engman, Jim Kriner and I were able to meet with Jeremy Waite from the Cheoah District Forest Service Office and drive in over the Forest Service Road to the end to scout it for the scheduled trip on [April 15th](#). After that, the three BMTA folks were able to scout and flag an astonishing 2.4 miles from the road down to the Old Field Road crossing. While heavily overgrown, this will be a great hiking trail and will offer views of both the mountains of the National Park and the Yellow Creek and Joyce Kilmer Slickrock Wilderness.

Unfortunately, the work trip scheduled for [April 15th](#) had to be cancelled for weather, but we are planning a two-day work trip on April 25 & 26 to open the section between the power line crossing and Green Gap above Fontana Village.

The next big effort will be the American Hiking Society Volunteer Vacation scheduled for [May 4](#) thru 9. BMTA folks are welcome to join us for one or more days, and free camping will be available if you let me know in advance.

We also have a work trip scheduled for [May 24th](#), so let me know if you can make that trip.

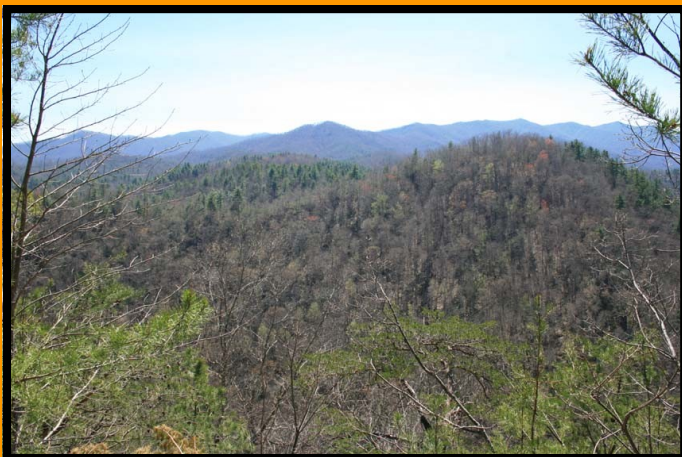
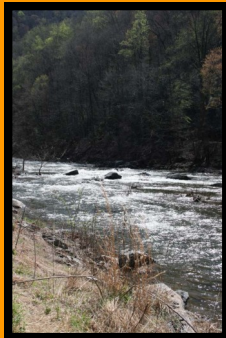
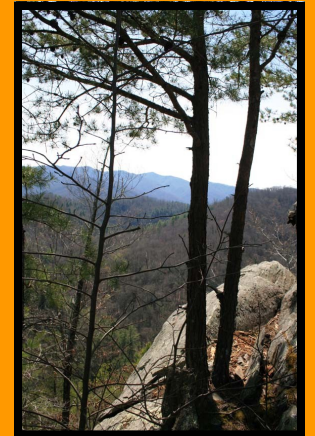
The opening ceremony will be at 10 AM on [May 30th](#) at the Old Field Gap Road Crossing, followed by hikes on the trail.

Dick Evans
bmta@frontier.com
 828-479-2503



Yellow Creek Re-Route Visited By Our Board

After the April 5th quarterly BMTA board meeting, the board members traveled to the new Yellow Creek re-route. They hiked much of the reroute. Pictures by Joy Forehand.



Upcoming Hikes

By Ralph Heller – Hiking Director

May 2-4: Hiking and Car Camping weekend at Rainbow Springs - (private campground with no charge to camp) with GATC and BMTA Board Member Bob Ruby. Near headwaters of Nantahala River off of Route 64. Stay overnight or come for the day and choose from several hikes.

To pre-register and for more information contact Bob - [bmtabob AT gmail.com](mailto:bmtabob@gmail.com) or 404-252-8888.

May 2: Fun Hike – Ocoee Outdoor Center area. Bear Paw Loop, then Rhodendron Trail for a 3.7 mile moderate to easy hike. There is a parking fee. Bring your lunch and watch rafters and kayakers navigate class 3 & 4 rapids after the hike.

For more information contact Hike Leader Hank Baudet at 706-492-4318 or [geezer95 AT gmail.com](mailto:geezer95@gmail.com).

May 21: Fun Hike: Hike on the BMT involving Skeenah Gap. This is a moderate 5.3 mile hike on beautiful Section 4.

For more information and to register contact BMTA Board member Joy Forehand the Hike Leader. Joy can be reached at 386-334-0336 (cell) or at [jwfbarga AT gmail.com](mailto:jwfbarga@gmail.com).



Hike Inn Overnight on March 12

By Ralph Heller – Hiking Director

As usual for the time of year, the weather forecast was dicey on March 12. Rain and wind were originally forecast and everyone was keeping their eye on the hourly predictions for that Wednesday morning. Finally, on **Tuesday** indications were that the rain would be over in the mountains shortly after 9 am, and the weather man was correct this time. We had twenty folks make the trip and many of them were first timers. Supper and breakfast were delicious as usual and everyone was glad the trip was not cancelled. After the evening meal, the group saw a video titled “*American Values American Wilderness*” narrated by the late Christopher Reeve. It turned cold overnight, but the rooms stayed warm and the sky was clear for a beautiful sunrise treat in the morning. Let’s do it again next year!



Photos Taken By Brenda Harris

HEMLOCKS NEED BMTA HIKERS' HELP

By Donna Shearer

The hemlock trees from Georgia to Maine are being killed by a spreading infestation of the hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA), an invasive insect native to Asia with no local natural predator. The bad news is that the bugs have now spread to every county in the native hemlock range in Georgia and most in Tennessee, and the problem is especially evident along the Benton MacKaye Trail. The good news is that there are three ways YOU CAN HELP SAVE THEM.

The first way is to learn how to combat HWA by taking a free half-day Facilitator Training Workshop presented by Save Georgia's Hemlocks (SGH). The class provides in-depth information on the trees, the bugs, assessing infestations, cultural controls, chemical treatments, biological controls, cost and safety, complete how-to instruction for treating the trees, and in-depth volunteer training for assisting others in your own community, saving trees on public lands, and more.



The second way is especially suited to hikers. You can participate as a “citizen scientist” in a SGH-sponsored project to research Rosellinia needle blight, a new fungal problem that is attacking and killing hemlocks even faster than the adelgids. Whenever you're out on the trail, you can observe, document, and photograph instances of the problem giving locations with GPS coordinates if possible. The information will be used to help identify this type of blight harming the hemlocks, determine its distribution and severity within the native hemlock range, document its symptoms over time, observe whether it affects any other trees, and hopefully support work toward controlling it.

Send your reports to donna@savegeorgiashemlocks.org.

And the third way is actually a lot of fun. You can join a volunteer project with SGH to help the U. S. Forest Service treat hemlocks on the Chattahoochee National Forest. After a brief orientation, volunteer teams of interesting outdoors folks (including at least one experienced Facilitator) head out into the woods and treat pre-tagged trees for a few hours, come together for a picnic usually beside a waterfall or stream, and then finish up by around 3 p.m. As you know, it's always enjoyable sharing our natural spaces with other like-minded people, and the feeling of doing good work for the benefit of the forest and waterways is truly rewarding.

These are practical, immediate opportunities to help save the hemlocks while there's still time to do so. Please check the Schedule of Events page of the SGH web site, and then email donna@savegeorgiashemlocks.org or call 706-429-8010 to get more detail or sign up to participate.

Save Georgia's Hemlocks is a 100% volunteer, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization of concerned citizens dedicated to preserving, conserving, and restoring endangered hemlocks through education and charitable service. To learn more, please visit www.savegeorgiashemlocks.org or call the Hemlock Help Line 706-429-8010.



Annual Walk-Thru

BMTA Members, ALL HANDS ON DECK!

Time to get ready for the heavy hiking season by taking a snapshot of the entire trail on a single day.

This year we are splitting the walk-thru dates to allow those so inclined to participate twice – and maybe walk a new section of the trail! Here are the dates:

Saturday 3 May for TN/NC sections north of U.S. 64.

Saturday 17 May for GA sections plus TN section south of U.S. 64

Even if you are not able to walk a section you can help, and get in on the fun, by [serving as a shuttle driver](#) for those who do walk.

What It Is

Once each year, the BMTA members hike and report on trail conditions. We cover all 200 miles south of the Smokies. The information gathered on problem trail conditions is collected by Maintenance Directors, used to determine future work-trips, and relayed to section maintainers so that repairs can be made. It's a vital audit of trail conditions. It's also a rewarding way to enjoy a hike in the woods on the BMT.

To Participate

The BMTA welcomes all to take part in the Annual Walk-Thru. If you'd like to help but prefer not to hike, car shuttles are needed and this is a great way to contribute. Shuttle drivers free up the hikers so that more trail can be covered. This valuable service is much appreciated. Please contact a Maintenance Director (see below) to volunteer.

For hikers, we ask that you hike in pairs. One person from each party is asked to download and review an [Annual Walk-Thru Report Form](#), fill it out, and return it via either email to (walk-thru@bmta.org) or US mail to (PO Box 6, Cherry Log, GA 30522) within one week of completing the walk thru.

Thank you for helping us gather this important information on trail conditions.

Questions? For Georgia sections, contact Tom Keene at 770-548-4935; for North Carolina and Tennessee, contact Bill Hodge or Rick Harris at 513-260-1184 or 423-253-6358. Either can also be reached by sending an email to (walk-thru@bmta.org). Direct your question to them by name.



Biennial Conference for All Hikers

Coming this September 18-21 (Thursday-Sunday)

Biennial Conference for All Hikers

Sponsored by

Southeastern Foot Trails Coalition

At

Blairsville, GA New Conference Center

And

Nearby Vogel State Park

- All in the North GA Mountains, near both NC and TN -
Workshops aplenty, both new and previous favorites

Saturday Banquet Speaker: Ron Tipton,
New Executive Director of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy

- Wonderful, beautiful hikes to nearby mountaintop vistas and
waterfalls –
(Nearby Appalachian Trail and Benton MacKaye Trail featured)

Details of registration, local housing facilities (inns, cottages, camping), and
costs/fees coming your way soon.