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BMTA Officers 2014-2015

President:	Bob Ruby
Vice President:	Tom Keene
Secretary:	Joy Forehand
Treasurer:	Margaret Evans
GA M/C:	Barry Allen
TN/NC M/C:	Tracy Sheffield
Smokies Coord:	Dick Evans
Hiking Director:	Ralph Heller
Membership/Store:	Ken Cissna
Publicity:	George Owen
Conservation:	Steve Bayliss
Past President:	David Blount
State Rep GA:	Mark Yost
State Rep TN/NC:	Rick Harris



BMTA Headquarters

Benton MacKaye Trail Association



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NOVEMBER 29, 2014

BMTA President's Column – Bob Ruby

As we celebrate this annual time of Thanksgiving, I am reflecting on the many things BMTA should be thankful for:

- Our wonderful trail corridor through almost 300 miles of the Southern Appalachian backcountry – conceived and laid-out by our founders and refined with reroutes almost every year.
- Our hikers – the day-hikers, section-hikers and thru-hikers who enjoy the beauty and solitude of the BMT.
- Our trail workers – the dedicated, volunteer trail builders and maintainers who give generously of their time and energy.
- Our Agency partners – Forest Service and National Park Service staff who provide resources, management and protection for the BMT on public lands.
- Other non-profit organizations (GATC, SEFTC, AHS, Forest Watch and others) – who share our objectives in protecting our forest resources and jointly fight to protect them.
- Private landowners – who have provided easements and permission to cross their property.
- Trail towns and other communities near the BMT – who welcome BMT hikers and promote the BMT as a recreational asset.
- Outfitters and resellers – who sell our books and trail guides, providing both funds and visibility for the BMT.
- Donors – who generously provide ongoing and special purpose funds for BMTA's financial needs.
- Unpaid staff volunteers and Board members of BMTA – who give of their time and creativity to help BMTA run with efficiency and effectiveness that would be the envy of many larger organizations.



Happy Holidays and looking forward to another great year for BMTA ...

Bob

Photos and story by Mike Pilvinsky ... The Gahuti Trail Hike

On Friday, November 7 eight hikers led by Mike Pilvinsky hiked the 8.2 mile Gahuti Trail at Fort Mountain State Park which is located above Chatsworth, GA on GA Highway 52E. The weather was a perfectly crisp 40-50 degrees throughout the day and the sky was incredibly clear. There were still remnants of gorgeous fall foliage to be enjoyed. The hikers had to carefully negotiate the trail, most of which was covered with a thick layer of slippery leaves. This trail is always harder and longer than it seems at first glance with the end of the hike visible after mile 6, yet unattainable for another two hours or so. Although this trail is just over 8 miles, hikers should plan for a 6 hour hike (including breaks) due to the difficulty and elevation changes. BMTA trail maintainers would be shocked at the sloppy blazing throughout the entire trail though. Funny how being a BMTA member makes you critical (read picky) about the state of maintenance of other trails.



From left. Thomas Sewell, Carolyn Sewell, Clayton Webster, Walter Polk, Ann Anderson, Dave Werkheiser, and Ricky Ammons



A view of Fort Mountain from the Gahuti Trail



Dave Werkheiser at one of the many magnificent overlooks along the Gahuti Trail

Upcoming Hikes ... by Ralph Heller-Hiking Director

Friday December 5 - Turtletown Creek Falls:

Length: Approx. 4 miles –moderate/easy

Elevation Gain: First half of hike is downhill. About 500 ft. climb from second falls back to parking lot

Hike Description: You get two waterfalls on one hike. The first mile is an easy walk on an old road bed along Turtletown Creek. Then, leaving the road bed there is a steep descent using switchbacks to get down to the base of the first falls. These falls drop about 30 feet and are divided at the top by a protruding rock. The hike down to the second falls is about $\frac{3}{4}$ miles easy walk on a gently sloping grade. At the second falls we will eat lunch. After lunch, the hike back follows the old road bed up Shinbone Ridge, which overlooks the Hiawassee River. Since the leaves are off the trees, there should be some good views of the river valley.

- To register for the hike and get meeting time and location, contact Hike Leader Nancy Sauls at nance_sauls AT [yahoo.com](mailto:nance_sauls@yahoo.com).

Friday January 3 – Hiking Tour of Amicalola Falls State Park

Length: Approximately 5 miles/moderate

Elevation Gain: Approx. 1000 ft. from Visitor Center to overlook on Hike Inn Trail

Hike Description: This hike starts at the top of the falls and goes down to the base of the falls. From there it goes downhill to the Park Visitor Center. From the Visitor Center we will continue through the archway which is the beginning of the Appalachian Approach Trail. We will leave the approach trail and hike up the old approach trail to the top of the falls and then to the Park Lodge Restaurant where we will eat lunch (optional). After lunch, we will hike about a mile on the Hike Inn Trail to a nice view site and then return to the top of the falls.

- To register for the hike and get meeting time and location, contact Hike Leader Mike Pilvinsky at oldsoldier67 AT [gmail.com](mailto:oldsoldier67@gmail.com) or (706)889-5254.

Continued on next page

Saturday Jan 24 – Easy Trek Hike From Highway 515/US76 through Sisson Cherry Log Mountain Development to Boardtown Road.

Length: Approximately 4 miles moderate/easy

Elevation Gain: Approx. 700 ft.

Hike Description: On this hike, we go through one of the few sections of the BMT that crosses private property. The trail goes mostly through coves which are away from the cabins in the development, but there is some road walk. We will pass by a lake with a small chapel and by one of only three shelters on the BMT. Then we will climb up Patterson Mountain, which is on the TN Valley Divide and has some great views of the surrounding mountains. This is also where a BMT trail reroute is in progress. From there, we will descend down to Boardtown Road, where we will shuttle back to the hike starting point. Afterwards, we will gather at the Pink Pig Restaurant for lunch (optional).

- **For more information and to register for this hike contact Hike Leader Ralph Heller at rshbmta AT [gmail.com](mailto:rshbmta@gmail.com) or (770)-235-9760.**

Future Hike: An overnight trip to the Hike Inn is in the works. This will probably occur in February. Information will be in the next newsletter or on the Activities section of the web site. Stay tuned!

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
December 26, 2014
SUBMIT ANY ARTICLE AND/OR
PHOTOS TO
*gnix (at) Ellijay (dot) com***

Georgia Work Trip Report, November 2014

Submitted by Barry Allen

November's work trip proved to be a great day in the woods with crews covering over three miles of trail in sections 2a and 2b. Our group of 13 converged on Three Forks at 9:15 on Saturday, the 8th and drove another 15 minutes to the Hickory Flat cemetery. Vehicles were consolidated at Hickory Flat for



the final 1.5 mile drive to the base of The Bald, a wildlife clearing maintained by the Forest Service and known by some as 'The Helicopter Pad', a reference to its former use by the U.S. Army Rangers as a helicopter training site.

After a short climb to the top of the Bald, we split into three crews: Robert Collins and Steve Bayliss moved south, cutting out blowdowns and snags in section 2a. These two men worked almost as far as Long Creek Falls, and the junction with the Appalachian Trail. A second chainsaw crew, manned by Marty Dominy and Mark Yost headed north, working through NoName Gap and the recent re-route, removing leaners and blowdowns well into Wildcat Ridge. George Owen and Phil Guhl walked the recent re-route at NoName for GPS tracking, and then George worked his way north with loppers and hand saw.

The balance of our party spent the morning refreshing water diversions on the hike to NoName Gap. New member Jeff DePaola was christened in the use of Pulaski and McCloud by our trail professor emeritus Tom Keene and we all welcomed Charles Fehnel -- guest for the day of Bob Sloan.

Charles worked as hard as any member during our 5 or 6 hours on the trail.

After a quick lunch at NoName, we worked briefly to block off the old trail head so the track of the re-route was less confusing. We also cleaned up the camp site at NoName (and the Bald) and then spent the bulk of the afternoon on treadway work for section 2b, passing a group of six Georgia State students out for a fall hike. At the end of the day, we all gathered at the bald for our hike down to the trucks and a quick hot dog and cup of apple cider. Our group of 13 tuned in 71.5 work hours for the day and over 40 hours of travel time (Marty Dominy turned in a full days' work just on the drive!) Once again, thanks to all of the above mentioned plus Ralph Heller and Frank Forehand. What a great group! Hope to see you next month.

Georgia ...December Work-Trip Announcement

DECEMBER WORK TRIP ANNOUNCEMENT - TRAIL BUILDING OPPORTUNITY

Please join us Saturday, December 13 as we work Section 7c, through the Sisson Property just off Highway 515/US76. Due to the recent sale of a new home on this private property, we have been asked to relocate our trail away from the home. The work for the day will involve a reroute of approximately ½ mile through the property and beyond. We supply the tools. The relocation is currently being reviewed and staked with the help of the Sisson's and Ralph Heller. We will also need to set a number of posts with blazes, marking a temporary road route while the work on the new path is in process.

Let's meet at Lamar's Corner, formerly L & A Country Store, across from the Pink Pig at 8:30 AM sharp. Come at 8:00 if you would like breakfast at the store. From the Country Store, we'll have a short drive to the site of the re-route on Section 7, starting work by 9:00. Contact trip leaders for the day, Barry Allen (770-294-7384) or Ralph Heller (770-235-9760), if you plan to come. Please join us on this trip if you are able. We'll need all the help we can get on this last minute reroute!

First-timers are most welcome! For what to expect, what to wear, what to bring, go to <http://www.bmta.org/pdfs/WorktripsWhatToExpect-revSep2011.pdf>

or call trip leaders Barry Allen (770-294-7384) or Ralph Heller (770-235-9760)

WEATHER POSTPONEMENT: If weather forces a change of plans, the trip will NOT be cancelled in most cases. Instead we will simply postpone the trip for one week. Because of the changeable nature of North Georgia weather we wait as long as possible before postponing. Usually the decision is made early Friday evening and circulated immediately by email.

TN/NC Work-Trip Announcement for December

By Tracy Sheffield

December 27th TNC work trip will be, “tentative to weather conditions”... working from Whigg Meadow downhill to Mud Gap clearing with chainsaws and brush cutters/loppers as needed. We will carpool from Skyway Visitor Center to Whigg Meadow leaving a vehicle at the Mud gap lot for shuttle.

Meet: 8:30 at the Tellico Grains Bakery or at 9 AM behind the Skyway Visitor Center.

If you have questions or plan to attend this work trip please send an email to: tncmaint@bmta.org

TN/NC Work-Trip For November

By Rick Harris

TN/NC crews worked November to clear the large blowdown, located about 0.2 miles in on the Stiff-nee Trail from Farr Gap, with crosscut saw and axe. It was a very cold day with a starting temperature of 18 degrees at Farr Gap. For the trip we removed several large Rhododendron trunks, two 10" trees, and a large >30" chestnut oak that fortunately was very hollow. We left one more 10" tree about head high over the trail that is supporting a very large section of the hollow tree. We ran out of time due to the potential for the large section of tree rolling down into the trail, once the 10" supporting trunk is removed.

Here are our hours for this work trip:

Name	Travel Hours	Work Hours	Totals
Ken Jones	1	5	6
Rick Harris	1	5	6
Tracy Sheffield	2.5	5	7.5

Section Maintainer's Corner

November tip of the month: When working to add new water diversions to a long stretch of trail on slope, don't try to do it all at once. Instead, start in the middle of the slope and position new diversions about every 10 feet OF RISE, working the area on multiple trips.

As a section maintainer, water diversions can be hard work when done correctly. Rather than exhausting yourself by installing six or eight diversions or water bars on a single work trip, install one or two diversions on successive trips until the slope is complete. By starting in the middle of a long run, you will eliminate half the volume of water before it picks up all the speed and sediment it gains by traveling a full slope. As time allows, continue to install new diversions by cutting the slope in half at each trip until the work is complete.

Remember, one of the most important features of the water bar is the outflow. If the outflow area is too small or too shallow, it will quickly fill in. One good source for specifics on water diversions is 'Trail Construction and Maintenance Notebook', 2007 Edition, by the late Woody Hesselbarth. This notebook is available with a Google search on the title or at <http://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/pubs/htmlpubs/htm07232806/>

Barry Allen

Georgia Maintenance Director, Benton MacKaye Trail Association

PICKENS COUNTY PROGRESS THURSDAY, NOV

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

On behalf of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association, I want to say thank you for helping us get the word out on our group hikes.

Since 2010, the *Pickens County Progress* has provided us coverage in promoting these events. We know, in fact, that your newspaper has brought us several new hikers who in turn have become regular participants in the BMTA hikes and also members/volunteers for BMT trail maintenance, which is our primary focus.

Sincere thanks to you in helping us carry out the Benton MacKaye Trail mission statement... leaving a footpath for generations to follow.

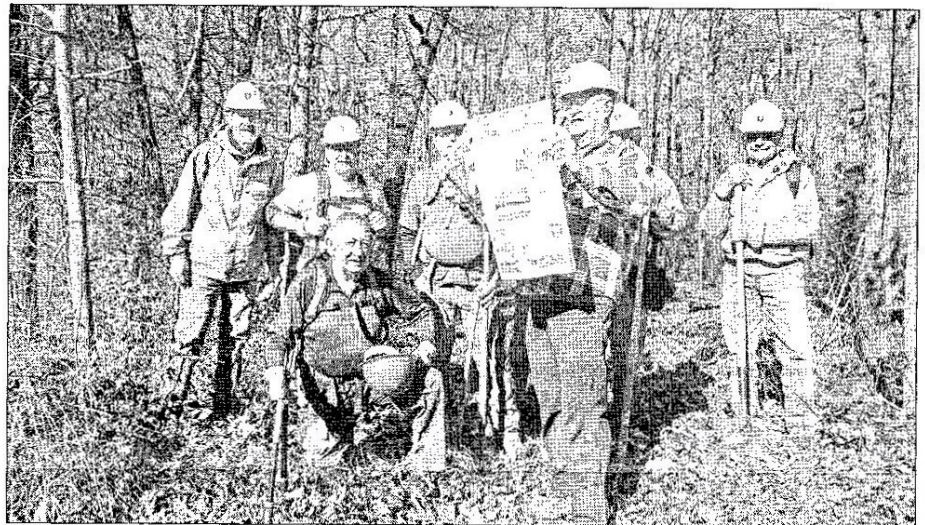
Marge Heller

BMTA Post Publicity Chair

BMTA
Getting The
Work Out
By Ralph and Marge
Heller

Where have you taken the Times-Courier?

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2014 **9C**



Contributed photo

Cherry Log resident, Ralph Heller, reads the *Times-Courier* on the Benton MacKaye Trail. Other BMTA members took a break from their November trail maintenance work day to hear the local news. Have someone take a picture of you reading the *Times-Courier* while traveling and send it to april@timescourier.com.

ON THE MOVE....

By: Ralph Heller

BMTA's Corporate Sponsor NORTH GEORGIA MOUNTAIN OUTFITTERS is moving to a new and larger store effective January 2015. Check the December Newsletter for details!

NEW ADDRESS, 5-1/2 miles north of their current location:

14244 Hwy 515 North
Ste. 1200
Ellijay, GA 30536

www.hikenorthgeorgia.com



BMT's Tool Man appearing in Miracle on 34th Street

By Marge Heller

Tom Mitchell, a resident of Morganton, GA, will play the part of the Judge in the Blue Ridge Community Theatre production of MIRACLE ON 34th STREET. A retired US Customs Special Agent, Tom and his lovely wife Janice moved to the mountains 16 years ago. Tom is responsible for keeping all of the BMT trail tools in great shape. He also is very involved as a set builder for the BRCT.

Come out to see and support our past Maintainer of the Year!

DATES: November 28 through December 14
Thursday, Friday, Saturday - 7:30pm
Sunday - 2pm

For more information or tickets, call [706-632-9223](tel:706-632-9223) or go on-line at www.blueridgecommunitytheater.com

