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BMTA Headquarters

Benton MacKaye Trail Association



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AUGUST 2016

President's Column August 2016 by Bob Ruby

Hunting Seasons on the BMT

It's that time of year again: great fall hiking weather and scenery, but hunting seasons on the BMT start as early as September 10. Details on these varying dates are listed at the end of this article. It's time to break out the blaze safety colors. You can show off your BMT Trail Maintainer shirts that you earned in the past few years, or you can buy an inexpensive blaze-orange cap or stocking hat for about \$5.

Bills in Congress to Keep an Eye On

Two bills have been recently introduced in Congress that would, if passed, impact the future of our forests:

- The ***Human-Powered Travel in Wilderness Areas Act (S.3205)*** was introduced by Senators Mike Lee (R-Utah) and Orrin Hatch (R-Utah). The legislation would allow bikers to join hikers and horseback riders in those scenic, undisturbed areas. The bill would require "local officials" of the USFS, NPS, BLM and FWS to designate within two years all wilderness trails not be opened to bicycles, otherwise they would default to bicycles being allowed. The proposal is controversial within the biking community and opposed by many conservationists who believe bikes would erode trails and upset the five-decade notion of wilderness as primitive spaces.
- The ***State National Forest Management Act of 2015 (H.R.3650)*** was introduced by Rep. Don Young (R-AK). This bill would direct the Forest Service, to convey to any state up to two million acres of the National Forest System (NFS) that the state elects to acquire through enactment of a state bill meeting certain criteria. States would pay or swap lands to the Forest Service for the Fair Market Value of the land transferred. The portions of the NFS conveyed to a state would be "administered and managed primarily for timber production."

BMTA as a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization is not allowed to lobby. I am calling each of these bills to your attention, so you can research them further, reach your own conclusions and take appropriate action as an individual to let Congress know your feelings on these issues.

Centennial Anniversary Congratulations to the NPS

August 25 was the 100th anniversary of the legislation that established the National Park Service, "America's Greatest Idea." Over 90 miles of the BMT crosses the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the most visited park in the entire NPS system by a factor of two. BMTA appreciates the great support and cooperation that we have received over the years from the Smokies staff and volunteers. Don't forget: if you hike 100 total miles on any trails in the Smokies during the 2016 Centennial year, you will be eligible for a special *Smokies Centennial Challenge - Hike 100* pin.

Help Needed (October Festivals)

We urgently need volunteers to help staff shifts in the BMTA booth at the **Arts in the Park, Oct 8-9 in Blue Ridge**, and the **Apple Festival, Oct.15-16 in Ellijay**. If you can help, please contact Marcia Lehman, Co- Chair of Publicity, mlehman10 AT yahoo.com before October 1.

Help Needed (Backup Webmaster)

BMTA's Webmaster, Terry Miller, is currently swamped and working long hours, on his day job. We would like to find someone to make updates to the website when Terry is not available. Note that this is not a request for someone to reprogram the website. That is a project that we will probably contract out in the not too distant future. If you are interested in helping, please let us know using the Contact Us (<http://bmta.org/ContactUs.phplink>) on the bmta.org home page.

Hunting Seasons on BMT Fall/Winter 2016-2017

Wear blaze colors and use caution while hiking!

(Overview information only. Review GA/TN/NC regulations for details.)

Georgia

Archery: Sept. 10 – Jan. 8

Primitive Weapons: Oct. 15 - Jan. 8

Firearms: Oct. 22 - Jan. 8

Tennessee

Muzzleloader and Archery: Nov. 5 -18

Gun, Muzzleloader and Archery: Nov. 19 - Jan. 8

North Carolina

Archery: Sept.10 – Oct. 2, Oct. 16 – Nov. 20

Black Powder: Oct. 3 – Oct. 15

Gun: Nov. 21 – Dec. 10

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

No hunting allowed at any time.

BMTA Annual Meeting Attendees Details for Registration Coming Soon!!

by Tom Keene

Planning to attend the BMTA Annual Meeting the evening of Saturday November 5 at Historic Tapoco Lodge? Watch for an email blast to all BMTA Members from Tom Keene, BMTA VP, around Sept. 15, enabling all attendees to register for the event, make dinner menu choices, and pay for the evening meal. The September BMTA newsletter, reaching you toward the end of the month, will also contain this registration information. Activities begin with hikes on Friday November 4 and run through Sunday November 6.

Lodging Reservations: Lodging reservations and payment must be made **directly** with the Tapoco Lodge or other location. **Be sure to ask for the BMTA meeting rate.**

Meeting Registration/Payment for Saturday Dinner: Meeting registration and payment for the dinner (\$25 per person) will become available on line via the BMTA website, or by mail on or around September 15.

- **The Tapoco Lodge Website:** <http://tapocolodge.com/>
- **Annual Meeting Discount Prices at Tapoco Lodge:** Prices start at \$219 with the Annual Meeting Weekend discount. **Be sure to ask for BMTA meeting rates when you call to reserve a room. We have a block of rooms saved until September 9 so don't delay! Book NOW!**
- **Camping Options:** Both of these sites are **first come, first served**. Neither will have drinking water after October 31. So BYO or filter.
Calderwood Campground: Located about a mile north of the lodge on US129 at Lake Calderwood.
NSF'S Horse Cove Campground: Near the entrance to Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest; 12.7 miles and 23 minutes from the lodge.
- **Other lodging options:** The **Phillips Motel** and the **Microtel Inn and Suites** both in Robbinsville, NC (15 miles and 21 minutes) have rooms starting about \$65.

Savor the Fall Festivals at the BMTA Booth!!

By Marcia Lehman

We'll be back for the Fall Arts in the Park Festival on October 8-9 in Blue Ridge and the Apple Festival, October 15-16 in Ellijay. We would greatly appreciate your help in staffing our tent, promoting BMTA and hiking in general. In other words, just talk to people and answer questions on what you know and are passionate about. If you are interested and available for a three-hour shift any of these days, we would welcome your involvement. Contact Marcia Lehman, Co-Chair of Publicity, mlehman10 AT yahoo.com and she will gladly put you on the schedule. What better way to celebrate fall in the mountains and serve the BMTA!

BMTA NEEDS YOU!! THANKS!!!

BMTA Cohutta Wilderness Hike

By Clayton Webster

On July 30 eighteen hikers set out on a five-mile section of the BMT in the Cohutta Wilderness. The hike took us on Section 9 of the BMT, and included a side trip to beautiful Shadow Falls on the South Fork of the Jacks River. Our trip leader was Larry Dumas. He has great knowledge of the Cohutta Wilderness area. Our access was via Old Hwy 2 between Blue Ridge and McCaysville. Old Hwy 2 was a paved road through a beautiful rural countryside before turning to gravel when we reached the Cohuttas. Our first order of business was to post a couple of vehicles at the end of the hike as this was to be a shuttle hike. While this was taking place, we were surprised to see quite a bit of traffic far back in this remote area. The Forest Service Road FS64 does go to Jacks River Fields which is a big horse camp. We were waiting at the intersection of the Benton MacKaye Trail, The Hemptop Trail #62, and the Jacks River Trail #13.

The beginning of our hike was the steepest part of the trail for the day. We chugged uphill through an area of thick rhododendron and mountain laurel with lots of hemlocks and white pines. Most of the hemlocks we saw were very infested with the wooly adelgid that is devastating the Southern Appalachians. After close to a mile we came out on what used to be a logging road probably 55 years or more ago.



Larry, in the orange shirt, is counting heads to make sure we are all together as we come up the hill to transition from the single file trail to the wider old logging road. Notice the double blaze on the tree. The diamond is the BMT marker. The double blaze indicates there is a turn here.

Once on the old logging road, we saw lots of signs that the trail is popular with horseback riders. To a lesser degree, we saw evidence that mountain bikers use this trail as well. The overall condition of the BMT we hiked on was very good, although some fairly recent blowdowns caused us to have to crawl over, under, or find a way around some of the bigger obstacles. Further along we came to an intersection of the Benton MacKaye Trail, The South Fork Trail, and the northern end of the Pinhoti Trail. The trail blaze used for the Pinhoti Trail is also a white diamond, but it has a turkey track in the center of the blaze. Clayton's son John rode his mountain bike several years ago all the way to Alabama in three days on the Pinhoti Trail.



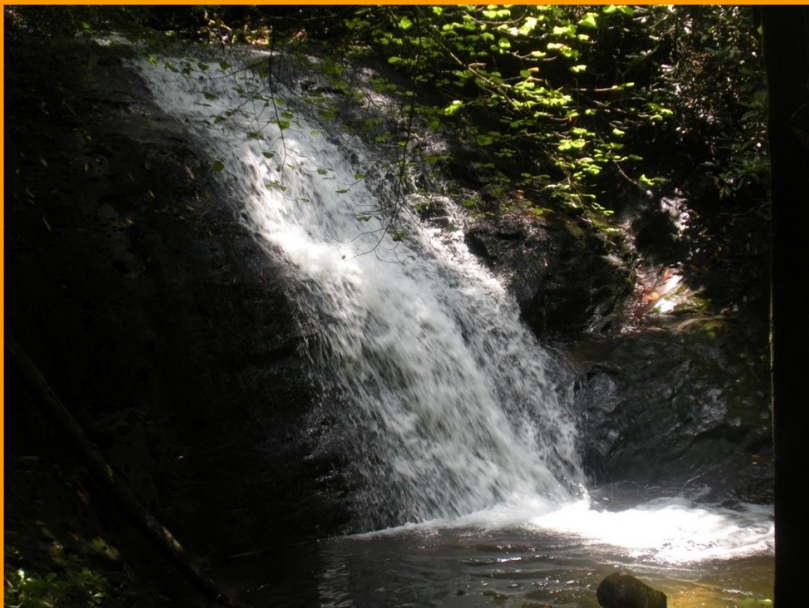
At this trail intersection Larry is telling us about the Pinhoti Trail and what we have coming up on our way to our lunch spot at a campsite by the South Fork of the Jacks River.

We were now on a section of the trail that was thick with Rosebay Rhododendrons. Some of the beautiful blooms were holding on, but the peak had been a couple of weeks ago. For the day we saw galax blooms and foam flowers still blooming, as well as some orchid-like rattlesnake plantain blooms. We also saw lots and lots of running cedar (sometimes called ground pine) and partridge berries. Joe Pye weed was beginning to bloom also. This part of the trail also had the most streams that we crossed for the day. All were rock hoppers that we easily managed. The day had started out in the high 60s with an overcast sky. But the humidity was very high. Plus we had the all uphill beginning to the hike as the weather warmed up. After that we got a short rain shower that got us even wetter as we made our way down the trail.

We were more than halfway through the hike by our lunch break. The trail after lunch took us further up the South Fork River Valley. It was along this stretch that we met the only other hikers we saw all day. A young couple said that they had come in after dark to set up their tent. They had found a flat place all right, but it happened to be on a water bar turn out. It is a good thing they didn't get a strong rain during the night, or they would've been swept down the hillside.



Here is a good portion of our group enjoying a well-earned lunch break at a campsite on the banks of the South Fork of the Jacks River. There was evidence that the site is used quite often with a nice fire ring and plenty of big logs to sit on around the campsite.



Shadow Falls was sparkling in the sun today!

There is really not a trail down to Shadow Falls. That might be one of the reasons it is not a well-known waterfall. But we were in for a special treat as it is a really nice waterfall. We had to skid down a steep hillside while holding onto rhododendron limbs to reach the falls that we could hear from high up the side of the mountain. The main falls is about a 25 foot drop into a nice looking swimming hole. There are multiple cascades both above the main falls as well as downstream below the falls.

Our trip to the waterfall was a detour from the main trail, so we had to backtrack a short distance to hike up to FS64 to reach our car shuttle. After one final steep climb we came out on the road and walked a short distance to our vehicles. At the end of the hike where our shuttle vehicles were parked there was an old cemetery as this was at one time a populated area. Graves went back to before the Civil War. Larry said the old church had burned down. In its place they have built a covered pavilion with a pulpit and church pews where they evidently have a service on Decoration Day in the spring. The drive back to our starting point had some of the steepest slopes that I have seen in all my mountain travels! It probably would not be possible to even crawl up to the road from the valley below.



When we got back to the cars at the beginning of our hike, there were a lot of horseback riders of all ages. There also was a wagon being pulled by two big horses. For seats in the wagon they had seats taken out of a car!

We thank Larry for leading the hike and telling us a lot about the Cohuttas. They truly are a treasure as combined with the Big Frog Wilderness in Tennessee, this is the largest wilderness area in Eastern America. This was new territory for all of us I believe. No one else besides Larry had been on this trail. Some of the hike was on WMA land and not in the actual wilderness area.

While driving to the trailhead or during our shuttle we saw two nice bucks plus a momma turkey and seven little ones.

Our meeting place before the hike had been Mercier's in Blue Ridge. It looks from the many apples on the trees that this might be another great fall season for this popular place!

Work Trip Report for August, 2016

by Barry Allen

YOU WANNA DO WHAT????????????? You must be crazy!

Yep, that was the initial response from our group of volunteers as I explained my plans for the second Saturday in August. **We were attempting to cover all of Section 8 – from Bushy Head Gap to Dyer Gap – 13 miles of trail – in one day.** To top it off, this is the most remote section of trail in Georgia with access points few and far between. **This plan seemed fitting for Section 8.** Former military brats, retired military, or simply fans of Cpl. Klinger on the old M*A*S*H TV program may remember the military reference to a “section 8.” Put very simply, a section 8 meant that you were mentally unstable and prime for a medical discharge. I felt strongly that anyone *volunteering* to work trail on a 90 degree day in August must be some type of mental defective, so I unhesitatingly put together a plan to suit a bunch of crazy people. Once the day began, we had to modify our plan slightly: one of our team leaders recently picked up a case of tick-borne Lyme disease while attending class in North Carolina. So we eliminated the most accessible section of trail from our work day plan --Bushy Head to Hudson -- and focused our attention on the remaining 10 plus miles of remote trail.

We gathered in Blue Ridge on Saturday morning at 8:30, quickly assigned duties and headed out for the work day. The first and largest group was led by Tom Keene and had the responsibility of chopping out weeds and brush from Hudson to McKenny Gaps. If time allowed, water diversions were also in need of cleaning on this section. And Tom made sure that time allowed!

The second group consisted of Robert Collins and Larry Dumas. This two man team had the most important job for the day – remove a couple of trees that were completely blocking the trail between McKenny and Hatley Gaps.

The third group consisted of Bob Cowdrick, Steve Bayliss and yours truly. **(This third group was comprised of the most seriously disturbed members of our volunteer corps.)** Our mission was to cover 10 miles of trail between Dyer Gap and Hudson Gap with chain saw and loppers. This section is so remote it is difficult to work with a large crew, but we figured a small, fast moving group just might be able to log out most of the section in one long day. Especially since Robert and Larry were taking out the nasty stuff close to McKenny.

To accomplish this work plan, shuttles would be a critical feature. Ralph Heller, along with Phil and Debra Guhl, were responsible for making sure folks got to the right places. Ralph left Home Depot promptly at 8:50 on the way to Dyer Gap with the three crazy people -- Steve, Bob and Barry. The rest of the team headed to Bushy Head Gap for another safety session and a shuttle to Hudson.

Of course, the day went exactly as planned: No problems, no unforeseen circumstances. Easy peasy lemon squeezy. Or not! A chain saw that wouldn't start; a chain saw that did start, got stuck and got broke; hornets and yellow jackets; medication side effects; a stinky coon hound named Willie; a stinky chain saw operator named Barry; raw spots rubbed in areas that don't normally see the light of day. I could go on and on, but I'll do you all a favor cut things short. All in all, one of the most productive trips I have ever been honored to help lead.

Tom Keene's team of Bob Ruby, Doug Kleiber, Mike Kovitch, and David Blount managed to clean out 30 water diversions and sling blade weeds from the better part of 1.5 miles of trail. Doug and Mike took some punishment from the wasps and hornets along the way, but these two men never uttered a word of complaint. (And thanks for flagging the yellow jackets, guys. I knew exactly what they were when the bright flags drew my attention to the holes in the ground with the swarming bees)

Robert and Larry expertly removed a couple of tough blowdowns between McKenny and Hatley Gaps. We won't mention the stuck and subsequently broken chain saw. **But we will learn and teach others to be wary of the possible side effects of new medications.** These two former Navy men definitely conquered and overcame, using an ax to remove the last blowdown.

Thanks finally to Steve Bayliss and Bob Cowdrick: these two hearty souls along with myself -- and an old coon hound we called Stinking Willie -- covered almost 11 miles of trail in eight hours while removing 20 blowdowns of various sizes, lopping out brush, and pulling obstructions from the trail in many areas of this remote section. Great job by these two BMTA members. And an honorable mention to Stinking Willie who joined us on the backside of Flat Top Mountain and stayed with us for the next eight or nine miles. What a job Stinking Willie did scouting for us during the day! Unfortunately, I could only turn in half of Willie's volunteer time to the Forest Service since he went braying after coon scent twice during the work session. (Just so we are all clear, any injuries suffered while chasing coons will not be covered under the Forest Service Workers Comp Insurance Plan.) At the end of our journey, Willie's owner picked him up at Hudson Gap -- the result of a timely phone call earlier in the day. And I really appreciated Bob and Steve's comment that I should be riding in the back of the truck like Willie, since I smelled worse than the dog. Thanks guys.



What's the holdup guys?



We're coming, we're coming!

Doug Kleiber, Bob Ruby, Mike Kovitch, & Tom Keene. David Blount, behind the camera.



Stinking Willie checks for Yellow Jackets
Stupid Humans dither



Trying to get upwind from Barry

We all enjoyed the day; it was a great walk in the woods with a cooling breeze ordered up by the Good Lord above to keep things bearable. Hope you can join us for September on Section 9 and a beautiful stretch along the South Fork of the Jacks River!



Facing the whiffs of hard labor!

Consumer Reports: Cheaper EpiPen Alternative

By Bob Ruby

If you are not highly allergic, taking an antihistamine, such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl) or a non-sedating one such as loratadine (Claritin) will help with itching and swelling. But highly allergic people have life threatening reactions, a condition known as anaphylaxis or anaphylactic shock. The primary emergency treatment for this condition is the prescription drug epinephrine, delivered with the EpiPen injector.

Unless you have been living under a rock, you have probably heard the recent furor over the rapidly increasing price of EpiPens at \$600 for a two pack. Consumer Reports recently reported “EpiPen isn't the only epinephrine injector on the market; the authorized generic of Adrenallick (epinephrine auto-injector), is a cheaper option—we found it for \$142 at Walmart and Sam's Club using a coupon from GoodRx.” For more information on Adrenallick, see <http://www.consumerreports.org/drugs/can-you-get-a-cheaper-epipen/>.

BMTA Nominations for 2017 Officers

by Committee Members: Tom Keene, chair; Joy Forehand, Barry Allen, Ken Jones

Position	2016 Holder	Yrs. In Service	2017 Nominee
President	Bob Ruby	2	Tom Keene
Immediate Past Pres	David Blount	2	Bob Ruby
Vice President	Tom Keene	2	Dick Evans
Secretary	Joy Forehand	3	Joy Forehand
Treasurer	Margaret Evans	4	Margaret Evans
GA Maintenance	Barry Allen	2	Barry Allen
TN/NC Maintenance	Ken Jones	1	Ken Jones
Smokies Coordinator	Dick Evans	2	Dick Evans
Membership	Ken Cissna	2	Ralph Heller
Publicity	Marcia & Marge	1	Marcia & Marge
Conservation	Peter Busscher	1	Peter Busscher
Hiking	Mike Pilvinsky	1	Ken Cissna
Newsletter Editor	Kathy Williams	2	Kathy Williams*
State Rep: GA	Larry Dumas	1	Appointed by 2017 President
State Rep: TN/NC	Rick Harris	4	Appointed by 2017 President

In Article IV, Section 9, the BMTA Bylaws stipulate the process for the nomination and selection of the members of the Association's Board of Directors. Each year the President is to name a nominating committee to sort out a slate of nominees. That slate of nominees must be shared with the general membership no later than 60 days before the Association's annual meeting. The nominees are to be voted on at the annual meeting; additional nominations may be made from the floor immediately prior to the vote being taken.

* The Newsletter Editor is elected by majority vote of the Board of Directors, not by vote of the general membership at the annual meeting. The editor is not a voting member of the Board but is invited to attend and participate in its meetings.

Hiking Pine Log Creek Trail

by Clayton Webster

On August 20 fifteen hikers headed out to explore the 4.5 mile Pine Log Creek Loop Trail in Bartow County. Clayton Webster was the trip leader with Mike Pilvinsky serving as the sweep on the beautiful figure eight loop hike.



From the left: Lydia Kieft, Ruth Horn, Connie Dassinger, Bryan Kemp, Elizabeth Lamb, Tom Sewell, Howard Baggett, Ken Cissna, John Urbaitis, Evelin & Doug Yarn, and Carolyn Sewell. In front: Mike Pilvinsky and Bob Brown. Clayton Webster took the picture.

A little over half way through the hike we came to a short spur trail out to the rock quarry lake. This is where we had our lunch. Entertainment was provided by the many fish in the lake as they jumped and fought for every small cracker or bread crumb we tossed to them. There were some amazing rock formations at the edge of the lake that reflected in the still water. The quarry was built in the 1930s by the CCC. This area has a long Indian history. It is said that De Soto visited the area along Pine Log Creek when there was an Indian village here.



It's time for lunch at the old CCC rock quarry lake!

The Pine Log Creek Trail is very deceiving as from the level parking lot in a valley it appears that there will not be much elevation change. However there really is a lot of up and down along the way. There are also several creeks other than Pine Log Creek with seven different bridges to cross along the way. Some of the trail follows deep ravines with lots of mountain laurel and rhododendron. Several years ago in Bartow and Gordon Counties there was a terrible tornado that was so severe that over 50 cars and numerous 18 wheelers were overturned on I-75. We saw some of the remains from that storm as lots of metal from chicken house and barn roofs was scattered through the woods miles from where the buildings were.

On the way back we followed Pine Log Creek for quite a ways. Along the creek bank there are often geodes visible. We did find a couple of geode pieces, but they have been picked over a lot over time. It was on the way out that we saw our first hikers coming towards us. Most were planning to hike the entire loop, but seemed ill prepared with no water bottles or rain gear. The forest all day was really fresh from recent rains. In the past I have seen numerous deer and wild turkeys on this trail, but our large group probably kept us from seeing any wildlife this time. One thing we were glad to not see was any yellow jackets!!



This reflection makes it look like a giant whale has its mouth open at the CCC rock quarry lake where we ate lunch.

We appreciate Mike Pilvinsky serving as the sweep for our hike. Everyone was an accomplished hiker and we all pretty much kept together as a group making Mike's job very easy. Mike is the Hiking Director for the BMTA. Ken Cissna, Membership Chair for the BMTA, was also on the trip and was glad to sign up two new members to the association, Elizabeth Lamb and Bryan Kemp.

Everyone really liked the trail. Only trip leader Clayton Webster and John Urbaitis had previously hiked this trail. I think some will be back again.

Shirts Benefiting BMTA Make Great Gifts!

by Marge Heller

It's not too early to be thinking about holiday gifts and what better way to combine giving to friends and family while also benefitting the BMTA!?

Please check out these great new Benton MacKaye Trail shirts available at Terra Outfitters, in Blue Ridge, GA or available on-line at: <http://terra.atayne.com/> Atayne

The performance tops are made from a lightweight 100% recycled polyester micro mesh fabric that wicks moisture and dries quickly. The photographs are real pictures of the Benton MacKaye Trail in Blue Ridge! Three scenic designs and one solid green, with logo, are available in men and women's sizes including sleeveless, short sleeves and long sleeves.

Thanks to the generosity of Corporate Member, Terra Outfitters, and the manufacturer, Atayne, proceeds benefit the BMTA for the continuation of trail conservation efforts . Stop by Terra Outfitters to order yours or shop online and support your trail today!



Save Hemlocks On Public Lands Day September 24

by Ralph Heller

Many BMTA members live in or have getaway cabins in the mountains. September 24 will be your chance to learn how to treat hemlock trees to help prevent their destruction from the hemlock woolly adelgids. You can use this experience to learn about this threat and learn how to treat infested trees on your property and in your neighborhood.

Even if you are not a regular participant in BMTA activities, I encourage you to attend this event. This is an annual cooperative effort between Save Georgia's Hemlocks, the BMTA, and the U. S. Forest Service to treat hemlock trees in a designated conservation area in the Chattahoochee National Forest. Experience is not necessary, as small teams will be guided by Save Georgia's Hemlocks Members and FS personnel who are experts in treating the hemlocks.

This year we will be treating trees in the Stanley Creek/Fall Branch Falls area. Part of this area will be along the new reroute we are working on up to the falls. Other hemlocks will be treated upstream on Stanley Creek in a beautiful valley with many large old growth hemlocks.

There are many hemlocks that need to be treated, but the treatment area is near the road and easily accessible. The work is not difficult. Let's have a good showing from our BMTA folks and see some new faces of our members. This is a chance to learn and also pay back for the wonderful experiences we get from the land we all own, our public lands.

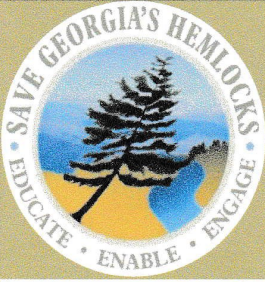
See you on Sept.24! Check the flyer on the following page for further information and how to register to participate.



Infested



Complete devastation



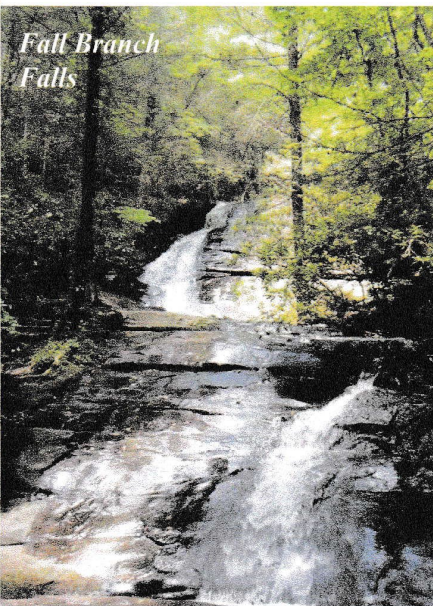
Mark Your Calendar



Hike & Help the Hemlocks Saturday, September 24, 2016

9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Fall Branch Falls / Stanley Creek near Cherry Log



Save Georgia's Hemlocks and the Benton MacKaye Trail Association are teaming up again for our annual **Hike and Help the Hemlocks**, an education and service event in support of the U. S. Forest Service to save the hemlocks on the Chattahoochee National Forest. This year's outing will be in the Fall Branch Falls / Stanley Creek hemlock conservation area in Gilmer County.

Following a short orientation, members of both organizations will work together in small teams to treat (or re-treat) pre-tagged hemlocks to protect them against the hemlock woolly adelgid, the invasive insect that's killing them all across north Georgia. You'll not only be **saving trees on our public lands** but also **learning how to treat your own trees** (if you don't already know).

We'll pause for a picnic lunch beside the waterfall, some interesting lunch-and-learn presentations, and a time to get to know other good folks who share a love of the outdoors. The weather should be good, the scenery lovely, the work rewarding, and the company great! So dust off your boots and invite a friend to come along.

Participants must register in advance. Driving directions and other details will be posted on the SGH and BMTA web sites.

Space may be limited, so please register early. For registration and details:

SGH — e-mail donna@savegeorgiashemlocks.org.

BMTA — e-mail mpilvinsky@ellijay.com.

BMTA Hiker Guidelines

by Mike Pilvinsky

CONCEPT: The BMTA Hike Director schedules one or more recreational hikes each month. An effort is made to schedule hikes of varying difficulty and in locations that are convenient to members who live along the BMT corridor. Occasional backpacking and camping trips are also scheduled. Each hike will be listed on the activity page of "bmta.org." Although open to the public, priority of participation goes to BMTA members first. Our hikes include treks along the BMT as well as other trails in Georgia, Tennessee, South Carolina and North Carolina.

LIABILITY: BMTA members and guests must recognize that there are risks and responsibilities involved and be willing to assume these risks. Members and guests are required to sign a waiver of liability at the beginning of each BMTA event in order to participate. If the parent does not accompany a minor, the disclaimer for minors must be signed in advance.

HEALTH: It is the personal responsibility of each participant to ensure that they are physically fit enough for the field conditions that exist and any expected conditions that may occur, and be able to keep up with their group. Be aware that hiking in the mountains is considerably more difficult than walking on roads, sidewalks, and treadmills. Each individual is responsible for their medical requirements, to include first aid and medications. You must inform the hike leader if you suffer from medical conditions which could arise on the hike. For example: Insect allergies, diabetes, hypoglycemia, heart problems, etc. In addition you must show the other hikers the location of any emergency medications you are carrying, such as an EpiPen.

PARTICIPATION: Hikers must phone or email the designated hike leader to determine if the hike is appropriate for the hiker's level of fitness and experience. Beginning hikers, or hikers with below average fitness, should start with shorter hikes or hikes rated easy and then make transitions to more difficult hikes as they develop their hiking skills. **All should arrive at the meeting place 15 minutes prior to the beginning of the hike** to hear the hike leader's instructions, sign the liability waiver, get directions to the trail head, and depart on time. Generally, our hikes depart on time so if you are only a few minutes late, the group may have departed without you unless you make other arrangements with the hike leader. Guests will be allowed on hikes on a space available basis and must pre-register with the hike leader. In other words, don't surprise the hike leader by showing up with several unexpected guests that have not been vetted.

CANCELLATION: Hikes may be cancelled due to existing or forecast bad weather conditions. If in doubt, phone the hike leader before reporting to the meeting place. If the hike is cancelled, the hike leader will contact everyone via email.

WHAT TO BRING:

- Water..1 quart plus 1 quart more than you think you need
- Snacks
- Personal First Aid Kit and hand sanitizer
- Rain Gear
- Cell phone

Continued next page

Sunscreen and insect repellent
Headlamp or small flashlight
Extra clothing (socks, hat, gloves, layers)
Backpack, knife, plastic bag, map and compass, toilet paper, trowel.
Hiking Poles

WHAT TO WEAR: Hiking clothes: synthetic, wool or silk materials that wick moisture and dry quickly are best. Multiple thin layers work better than fewer thick layers. Cotton is not preferred because it retains moisture, dries slowly and cotton socks may cause blisters. Comfortable, well broken in hiking boots/shoes. Street shoes and work boots are not the best choice.

RIDE SHARING: It is the policy of BMTA not to become involved in ride-sharing. The hike leader will lead the group to the trail head. Who you ride with to and from the trail head is a personal decision that does not involve the hike leader or BMTA. If you do ride with another hiker, remember to contribute for driving expenses.

HIKE MANAGEMENT: Each hike will have a designated hike leader. The hike leader may appoint co-leaders as well as sweeps for each hiking group. Hikers should stay on the trail between the leader and the sweep. By participating in the BMTA sponsored hike, you agree to accept the authority of the leader(s) and to follow their directions.

- ◆ If it is necessary for you to leave the trail for a restroom break, inform the leader or sweep and the sweep will wait on the trail until you return.
- ◆ If you decide to leave the hike altogether, the leader must be informed and physically sign you out on the sign-out sheet. This does not apply if you need assistance. The hike leader will normally ask another hiker to accompany you back to the trail head.
- ◆ If you are in doubt about your ability to complete the hike without problems, heed the advice of the leader. It is better to miss the hike than to endanger yourself and others if you encounter problems. ***The hike leader may exclude any person from a hike at his or her discretion.***
Pets are not to be brought on any BMTA sponsored hike.

HIKE ETIQUETTE: Hiking etiquette is mostly common sense, but there are a few topics that are hiking specific:

- ◆ We hike quietly and keep talk to a conversational level.
- ◆ When hiking on a trail, the larger group yields to the smaller group and moves off the trail until they pass.
- ◆ When hiking downhill, yield to any hiker coming uphill. Yield to horses on the downhill side of the trail.
- ◆ When the group stops for any reason, move off the trail to let others pass
- ◆ Allow space so that if you fall you don't take the person in front of you down too.
- ◆ Turn your cell phone off!!!
- ◆ Bring plastic bags to put your dirty wet boots in when riding in another's vehicle

LEAVE NO TRACE: BMTA subscribes to the principles of “Leave No Trace.” For more detailed information go to www.lnt.org

- ◆ Leave what you find. Take only pictures, leave only memories
- ◆ “Pack it in-Pack it out.” This applies to your lunch and snack breaks. All left over food waste and litter must be packed out and taken back. No apple cores, banana peels or any other food or litter is to be left in the forests or on trails.
- ◆ All human solid waste must be deposited at least 200 feet from water or trails. Solid waste must be deposited in cat holes dug 6 to 8 inches deep, covered and disguised. Toilet paper and other hygiene products must be packed out. This is a good use for waterproof plastic bags.
- ◆ We strive for minimal impact. When on a hike, if no one could tell that we passed through an area, that is success. We hike on durable trail surfaces and stay on the trail. As good stewards of the environment, we carry out absolutely everything we carried in, and when feasible, pick up other litter along the way.

SAFETY: *You are responsible for yourself, so be prepared:*

1. ***With knowledge and gear.*** Become self-reliant by learning about the terrain, conditions, local weather, and your equipment before you start.
2. ***To leave your plans.*** Tell someone the trails you are hiking, the gear you are taking, when you will return, and your emergency plans. Consider using the “Safe Return Worksheet,” on the bmta.org maintainers page.
3. ***To stay together.*** When you start as a group hike as a group, and finish as a group. Pace your hike to the slowest person.
4. ***To turn back.*** Weather changes quickly in the mountains. Fatigue and unexpected conditions can also affect your hike. Know your limitations and when to postpone your hike
5. ***For emergencies,*** even if you are headed out for just an hour. An injury, severe weather, or a wrong turn could become life threatening. Don't assume you will be rescued; know how to rescue yourself.

August 5, 2016. Thanks to the Mountain High Hikers of Blairsville, GA for providing the model for these guidelines.



HIKE LEADER GUIDELINES & CHECKLIST

by Mike Pilvinsky

Location: _____ DATE: _____

Co-Leader(s): _____

Sweep(s): _____

Before Hike Day:

1. Obtain map of the hike area. If necessary, obtain strip maps from the meeting area to the trail head. Do an internet search of the trail and blogs.
2. *The pre-hike may be the most important thing you can do to prepare to lead a successful hike!* Select a date and time for a pre-hike of the trail. Consider taking one of your co-leaders on the pre-hike in the event you are unable to be present for the hike. The pre-hike is ideally conducted within two weeks of the scheduled hike. The pre-hike will increase your awareness of seasonal changes to the trail and give you and your leaders added confidence to handle situations along the trail.
3. If unable to lead the hike, find a substitute leader and notify the BMTA Hike Director.
4. Interview hikers that contact you for permission to join the hike. Determine if they are capable before giving permission to join the hike. Ask them to review the Hiking Guidelines at bmta.org.
5. Determine the nearest and/or best emergency access routes along the hike. Determine if cell phone access is available along the trail for 911 service.
6. Determine the communication method needed to manage your hike, i.e.: whistle, walkie-talkie, runner, cell phone, etc. If you decide to use special devices, ensure they are operational and that your co-leader(s), and sweep(s) know how to use them.
8. Check your own packing list and inventory the items in your first aid kit.
7. Review Medical Emergency Management Guidelines (see below)
8. BTMA recommends all hike leaders, regular hikers and maintainers complete First Aid, CPR and more advanced emergency training. This training is regularly offered for free from the US Forest Service and may be announced on the activity page at bmta.org. However, certification through other agencies is equally important for you to take if the training becomes available.

Hike Day:

1. Cancel the hike if extreme weather conditions exist or are forecast and inform them via email.
2. Introduce first time hikers & guests to the group and make them feel welcome. Provide a reminder to all that they should have their own first aid supplies and know how to use them, as leaders have no group supplies or medical expertise. Ask if anyone has any special medical expertise; if so, what. Note the most proficient medical person. Ask whether anyone has any insect bite allergies and uses an EpiPen, a heart condition that requires nitroglycerin, or has any other serious medical condition that might require immediate treatment. Physically see the location of the EpiPen or any emergency medication.
3. Excuse individuals who might pose a risk to themselves or others, or do not have the proper clothing, equipment, or water.

4. Provide the hike description, degree of difficulty, approximate speed of the group, significant points on the trail and color of blazes. If special conditions warrant, describe the difficulty of the road conditions from the meeting place to the trailhead.
5. Assess the abilities of the group. In designated Wilderness Areas, hiking groups may not exceed 12 in GA and 10 in NC, and group starts must be staggered about 10-15 minutes apart. This may necessitate more than one group. Groups should not come together while in the wilderness area. It is also recommended that when not in a wilderness area that groups not exceed 15 persons. This helps minimize trail impact. Do not pick the slowest/weakest hiker to be sweep.
6. Have the participants sign the waiver form. Bring extra copies. Inform the group that this form will be in the possession of the leader during the hike in case the emergency notification information is needed. Emphasize the need for an accurate emergency phone number. 911 is not an acceptable emergency phone number.
7. Describe the location of the trailhead and the route the cars will be traveling. Distribute strip maps if needed.
8. Keep this checklist with you during the hike.

During the Hike:

1. Determine the total number of hikers. Share this number. Do not permit hikers to go ahead of the leader or lag behind the sweep without permission.
2. The leader should stop at confusing intersections to allow all hikers to catch up if they are dispersed to ensure everyone takes the correct trail.
3. Call attention to all hazards and have the information passed down the line.
4. Stop periodically to assess the hikers, provide water breaks or to allow slower hikers to “catch up.” Survey the group to determine when lunch and snack breaks are needed. Take pictures throughout the hike. Take action shots...avoid boring pictures of the whole group standing in front of a sign. Faces showing emotion are the best pictures.
5. If someone has a medical emergency while hiking, consider the Medical Emergency Management Guidelines below.
6. If a person wants to leave the hike for any reason that does not require our assistance, you must physically sign them out by crossing their name off and having them initial it with the time of day noted.

After the Hike:

1. Account for all hikers.
2. Wait until all vehicles are road worthy before leaving the parking area.
3. Complete the waiver forms and return them to the Hike Director in person or via mail or email within one week.
4. Write an article with pictures and submit it to the BMTA Newsletter Editor.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR HIKE LEADERS

During the hike briefing at the meeting location or trailhead ask if anyone has any special medical expertise? If so, what? Make a note of the most experienced medical person.

If a medical emergency occurs, consider taking the following actions:

Assign the most proficient medical person to the immediate care of the individual. If you are the most experienced medical person, assign your remaining hike leader duties to one of your co-leaders. The medical person should canvass the group for any needed medical supplies from their first aid kits and supplies. If the victim is conscious, ask them if they want your help. If so, proceed. If not, ask them what they want and respect their wishes. If the victim is unconscious, consent to help is implied. Remember to only provide care within the scope of your medical expertise and do no harm.

The hike leader's job is to keep the group calm, organized and to provide leadership. Try to keep people occupied and away from the emergency site. Give them something to do.

If the medical person judges that outside assistance is required, call 911. If you cannot get a cell phone connection, try other carriers. If no one can get a connection select two competent and able bodied hikers to hike to a location that may provide a connection. Ensure they have the exact location of the emergency, and details about the patient including name, age, known medical history, and emergency contact phone number.

Once the medical response crew arrives, provide assistance, if requested, to speed the evacuation.

Finally, prepare a detailed report of the incident and forward it to the Hike Director and the President of the BMTA within 24 hours.



Upcoming Hikes

by Mike Pilvinsky Hiking Director

We hope September will bring some relief from the summer heat, and from the yellow jackets. Today (August 17) I discovered the first bear-demolished yellow jacket nest along the AT. That is a good sign. But, it also means the bears are already preparing for the lean times of winter, and you will probably see more signs of their activity on the trails. By the way, I heard of another home remedy to treat bee stings. A friend who is a very experienced long distance hiker carries a tiny bottle of ammonia based cleaning liquid. I have never used it but he swears it will take the sting out of any insect bite.

On Friday, September 2, we'll hike up Yonah Mountain near Cleveland, TN. Mt. Yonah boasts one of the most magnificent views in North Georgia. But, you have to climb to get there! The trail climbs over 1400 feet in elevation. There is no water on the trail, so bring plenty. After reaching the summit, we will walk back down about 300 feet and enjoy our lunch/snack above the cliffs. Forty-seven years ago I faced my fears on Mt. Yonah as a young Army Ranger student learning to climb and rappel on the sheer rock face where we will have lunch. Hiking there in recent years has been a lot more fun for me, but those are cherished memories. I am sure you will enjoy it too. This hike is considered moderately strenuous. It is a total of 5 miles. Afterward, those who want to may visit a local winery or two.

On September 21,22,23 we will be at Lake Conasauga for several hikes and a camping trip. ***THIS IS A DOG FRIENDLY OUTING!*** Though the standard policy of BMTA is that dogs are not allowed on our hikes, we are running a test with this hike and camping trip. Some of us will arrive at the Lake Conasauga campground in the Cohuttas on Wednesday, September 21 and remain there until Friday September 23. Lake Conasauga is located at least a 40 minute drive into the Cohuttas on Forest Service Roads. It is not necessary for you to be a camper to participate in these hikes.

On Thursday, September 22 we will hike the Grassy Mountain Fire Tower Trail, the Songbird Trail, and the Conasauga Lake Trail for a total of 7 miles. Shorter sections of the Thursday hike may be available, provided we have sufficient hike leaders on this outing. On Friday, September 23 we may hike the northern part of the Emery Creek Trail, or the Chestnut Lead and Conasauga River Trails for about 5 miles. The Friday hikes are a bit strenuous.

For meet up details please contact the hike leader at: [mikepilvinsky AT hotmail.com](mailto:mikepilvinsky@hotmail.com)

As mentioned above: ***THIS IS A DOG FRIENDLY OUTING!*** That means that well-behaved dogs are welcome, provided they are kept on a 6' leash at all times. All hikers who would like to bring a dog must contact co-leader Ken Cissna in advance of the hike at [kcissna AT usf.edu](mailto:kcissna@usf.edu) or 706-636-1741

**The deadline for articles for the September Newsletter is Wednesday September 21, 2016
Thanks for your support!!!!**