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BMTA Officers 2015-2016

President:	Bob Ruby
Vice President:	Tom Keene
Secretary:	Joy Forehand
Treasurer:	Margaret Evans
GA M/C:	Barry Allen
TN/NC M/C:	Ken Jones
Smokies Coord:	Dick Evans
Hiking Director:	Mike Pilvinsky
Membership/Store:	Ken Cissna
Publicity:	Marcia Lehman Marge Heller
Conservation:	Peter Busscher
Past President:	David Blount
Newsletter:	Kathy Williams
State Rep GA:	Larry Dumas
State Rep TN/NC:	Rick Harris



BMTA Headquarters



Benton MacKaye Trail Association

VOLUME 33, ISSUE 10

OCTOBER 2016

President's Column October 2016 by Bob Ruby

Drought Conditions and Campfire Restrictions

Extended hot, dry weather combined with dead and dry vegetation has caused extremely high wildfire danger in the forests along the Benton MacKaye Trail. Recent wildfire starts across the region have fire managers concerned.

A campfire restriction is now in place for all of the Chattahoochee, Cherokee and Nantahala National Forests. The restriction prohibits building, maintaining, attending or using a fire or campfire outside of developed recreation areas from now through or beyond year end 2016. This means that only campfires built within metal fire rings in developed campsites are allowed. Camp stoves are still permissible. The Forest Service reminds visitors that campfires should always be put out completely and be cold to the touch before being left for any period of time.

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park continues its standard restriction that campfires are only allowed in the fire rings at the designated campsites and shelters.

BMTA generally discourages campfires along the trail. This is a Leave No Trace principal, because people are tempted to try to burn trash leaving incompletely burned residue which is unsightly and may attract bears to the campsite.

I can personally testify that many regular water sources are dry across the high-country of the Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness. Fortunately the BMT frequently drops down to reliable streams, but careful planning and carrying more water than usual is essential.



Thanks to Board Members for a Great Two Years!

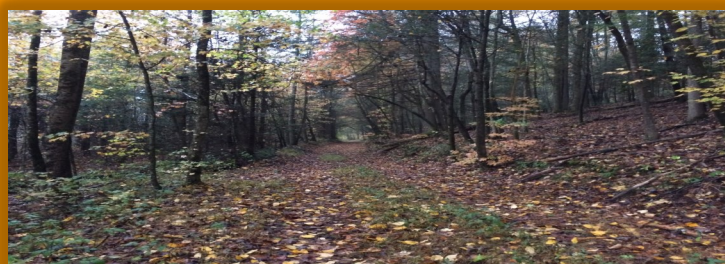
My term as President of BMTA comes to an end at the Annual Meeting on November 5. I have had exceptional support from a great Board of Directors during the past two years. Each has given generously of his or her time and talents in a variety of ways, but I want to recognize and thank each individually:

- **Vice President, Tom Keene**, has provided us with great advice on various issues and has headed the committee that organized our Annual Meetings and recommended the slates of candidates. Meanwhile he opened a new campus for Kennesaw State University in Italy. Tom will once again be an outstanding President for BMTA after being confirmed at the Annual Meeting.
- **Secretary, Joy Forehand**, not only kept comprehensive and clear notes at Board Meetings, but also followed up afterward to make sure nothing fell through the cracks. Joy also hiked the BMT after each competitive event in her area and reported on the post event condition of the trail.
- **Treasurer, Margaret Evans**, has been a superb controller and bookkeeper for BMTA. She always knows what was budgeted and where every penny goes.
- **GA Maintenance Director, Barry Allen**, not only organized and led maintenance of the Georgia BMT, but also took responsibility for the southern portion of Tennessee when it became apparent that BMTA has more active maintainers in North Georgia than in Tennessee and North Carolina. Barry was not only the maintenance leader, but also BMTA's hardest maintenance worker.
- **TN/NC Maintenance Director, Ken Jones**, stepped up to once again assume the job he had done so well in past years when BMTA lost its elected Director early in 2015. Ken's close working relationship with the Cherokee NF staff has been invaluable. His development of a team of maintenance "sub-directors" to share the workload with him will, I hope, become a model for BMTA in the future.
- **Smokies Coordinator, Dick Evans**, not only maintained our relationship with the GSMNP staff, but also coordinated maintenance for the Nantahala NF portion of the trail. Dick led the reroutes of the Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness and Yellow Creek Mountain Trail sections, thereby eliminating the BMT's longest, most dangerous roadwalk. While Dick turned over his Membership and Store responsibilities, he has continued to be our "go to guy" for PayPal implementation.
- **Membership and Store Manager, Ken Cissna**, assumed responsibility for these related responsibilities last year and has done a fine job dealing with our members and customers.
- **Publicity and Events, George Owen, Marge Heller & Marcia Lehman** When George relinquished his position due to a health problem (thankfully resolved), Marge and Marcia took over the Publicity and Events positions respectively. Marge reestablished her relationships with the news organizations along the BMT and has orchestrated outstanding coverage for the BMT.

Marcia took the events coordination role, got the Board to invest in a spiffy new event tent and has led numerous volunteers in representing BMTA at major regional events. These activities have increased the visibility of the BMT and recruited numerous new members and trail workers for us. George has recovered and continues to lead BMTA in a variety of ways.

- **Conservation Directors, Steve Bayliss and Peter Busscher**, both have applied their skills as accomplished attorneys to articulately represent and defend the interests of the BMT in the face of numerous requests for Special Use Permits. They have increased the sensitivity of the Forest Service and event organizers for the need to ensure that races and other events proposed on the BMT respect the need to protect the physical condition and solitude of the trail from excessive or damaging uses.
- **Hiking Directors, Ralph Heller and Mike Pilvinsky**, with help from other members have steadily increased BMTA's hiking program, ranging from "Easy Hikes" to multi-day backpacks. These hikes have been a steady source of new members for BMT. While Ralph turned over his Hiking job he continues to chair our Corridor Committee, as well as handle BMTA sales to major resellers.
- **Newsletter Editors, Gene Nix and Kathy Williams**. What can I say? You all see the results every month. Gene established a colorful and readable new format suitable for electronic distribution, and Kathy took over when Gene had health issues, quickly learned the necessary software (with tutoring by Joy Forehand) and has maintained the exceptional quality ever since. We have had comments from folks (who see lots of club newsletters) that the BMTA newsletter is tops!
- **State Representatives for Georgia, Mark Yost and Larry Dumas**, have been active volunteers and have provided their insights and assistance to the Board on a variety of issues.
- **State Representative for Tennessee and North Carolina, Rick Harris**, has long been one of BMTA's most active and effective supporters. He is a leader in trail maintenance, an adviser and angel to hikers passing through his area and was instrumental in Tellico Plains becoming a BMTA Trail Town.
- **Immediate Past-President, David Blount**, has been a wise counselor whenever his advice and experience were needed. David, who has served twice as BMTA President, continues to be an active volunteer and maintainer, even while continuing to work full-time.

In addition to those formally serving on the Board or committees, I want to thank all our volunteers who have contributed so much time and effort to maintaining the trail and otherwise doing the work that is critical to making the BMT a trail of renown. Finally, I need to thank our agency partners in the Forest Service and National Park Service for their continuing support and guidance.



Thanks Also to Resellers of BMTA Merchandise

In addition to direct sales through the BMTA Store on the website, BMTA serves the hiking community and raises funds through sales of its books and apparel through numerous regional retailers, all of whom deserve our thanks and support:

Amicalola Falls State Park, Blue Ridge Adventure Wear, Blue Ridge Mountain Outfitters, Coker Creek Welcome Center, Charles Hall Museum Store, Cherohala Skyway Visitor Center, Fannin County Chamber of Commerce, Historic Tapoco Lodge, Kats Deli, Mercier Orchards, Monroe County Department of Tourism, Mountain Crossings, Nantahala Outdoor Center, North Georgia Mountain Outfitters, Pink Pig, O's On the River (Ocoee Whitewater Center), REI, Rock Creek Outfitters and Terra Outfitters.

AmazonSmile Benefits BMTA

For those of you who will be doing some of your holiday shopping at Amazon, remember that if you use our AmazonSmile link, BMTA gets a donation from Amazon. BMTA's unique link is <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/58-1428009>

Do supporters have to click on BMTA's AmazonSmile link every time they shop?

No. Once customers select your organization, you will receive 0.5% of the price of all their eligible smile.amazon.com purchases, regardless of whether they use your unique AmazonSmile link to return to the site. However, *we recommend that you ask your supporters to bookmark and use your link so they don't accidentally shop at www.amazon.com instead of smile.amazon.com.* Only purchases made at smile.amazon.com are eligible for donations.

Time for BMTA Membership Renewals and Donations

We are entering the last two months of the year. It is time again to remind everyone that, unless you joined after October 1, 2016, your annual membership renewal is due by year end. While on the website renewing your membership, I hope you will consider making a supplemental donation. Both the membership and donation are tax-deductible, if you itemize.

BMTA lost a longtime friend this week when Beverly Batchelor passed away suddenly while vacationing in Arizona. While Beverly was not a member of BMTA, she has been a supporter of joint activities between BMTA and GATC. As a GATC Activities Committee member, she encouraged the annual GATC series of hikes across the BMT in Georgia. As GATC Newsletter Editor, she featured many write ups and photos of day hikes and backpacks on the BMT. As a GATC leader and Board Member, she was known and beloved by many members of both hiking clubs. We join with GATC in sending our condolences to her husband Olin.



Extreme Drought & Fire Danger

National Forests

1755 Cleveland Hwy

Gainesville, GA 30501

Web: www.fs.usda.gov/CONF

Twitter: @ChattOconeeNF

Facebook: US Forest Service - Chattahoochee Oconee National Forest

News Release

Media Contact: (303) 907-3248

Susanfordforestry AT gmail.com

Hunters and leaf-lookers face extreme drought and high fire danger; campfire restriction issued for Chattahoochee National Forest

GAINESVILLE (October 19, 2016) – Extended hot, dry weather combined with dead and dry vegetation has caused extremely high wildfire danger in the northern forests of Georgia. Recent wildfire starts have fire managers concerned. A **campfire restriction is now in place for all of the Chattahoochee National Forest.**

The restriction prohibits building, maintaining, attending or using a fire or campfire outside of developed recreation areas from now until December 31, 2016. That means that only campfires built within metal fire rings in developed campsites are allowed. Camp stoves are still permissible. The Forest Service reminds visitors that campfires should always be put out completely and cold to the touch before being left for any period of time.

Fire fighters have made good progress containing recent wildfires, including the 477 acre Strawberry Mountain wildfire in Walker County and the 1971 acre Fox Mountain wildfire in Dade County, Georgia. Fire crews will continue to mop up, patrol, and monitor these wildfires. Additional firefighting resources are ready to respond to new starts.

According to the Southern Area Coordination Center-Rapid Assessment Team's "Most Likely Case" scenario for the fall fire season, North Georgia can expect a longer than normal fire activity period due to the current drought and hot weather patterns, and "fires would get bigger faster." New ignitions can result in severe fire behavior due to these extreme conditions and minimal rainfall. An increased frequency of rain events coupled with more normal humidity levels would mitigate these fire concerns.

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Extreme Drought & Fire Danger

Cherokee National Forest

2800 Ocoee Street N.

Cleveland, TN 37312

Web: <http://fs.usda.gov/cherokee>

NOTICE

Forest Fire Restrictions

Fire Restrictions are in place for the entire Cherokee National Forest due to the extremely dry conditions, high fire danger and little chance of rain in the immediate forecast.

Effective October 29, 2016 the following fire restrictions are in place for the entire Cherokee National Forest until terminated by the U.S. Forest Service:

- **Building, maintaining, attending or using a fire, campfire or charcoal fire outside of developed recreation areas.** The use of portable lanterns, stoves or heating equipment that utilize gas or pressurized liquid fuel is allowed.
- Fires at developed recreation areas must be confined to receptacles designed for fire. Metal fire rings and grills are provided in Cherokee National Forest developed recreation areas. Campfires should always be put out and cold to the touch before left for any period of time.

Please be very careful with fire and to obey all state and federal fire related laws and regulations.



Extreme Drought & Fire Danger

ASHEVILLE, NC - October 28, 2016 - **The Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests** will implement fire restrictions due to the extremely dry conditions, high fire danger, and little chance of rain in the immediate forecast.

Effective October 28, 2016, the following fire restrictions are in place for the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests until further notice:

Building, maintaining, attending or using a fire, campfire, or stove fire is NOT ALLOWED outside of developed campgrounds where a fee is paid.

The use of portable lanterns, stoves, or heating equipment that utilize gas or pressurized liquid fuel is allowed. Charcoal fires are not allowed.

Permissible fires must be confined to metal fire rings and grills that are provided in the National Forest in the following campgrounds only:

<u>Nantahala Ranger District</u>	<u>Cheoah Ranger District</u>	<u>Tusquitee Ranger District</u>
Standing Indian	Tsali Campground	Jackrabbit
Van Hook Glade	Cable Cove	Hanging Dog
Apple Tree	Horse Cove	Bristol Fields
Hurricane Creek	Cheoah Point	Horse Camp
Kimsey Creek	Rattler Ford	
<u>Pisgah Ranger District</u>	<u>Appalachian Ranger District</u>	<u>Grandfather Ranger District</u>
Davidson River	Carolina Hemlock	Curtis Creek
Lake Powhatan	Harmon Den	Mortimer
Sunburst	Horse Camp	
North Mills River	Black Mountain	
Kuykendall	Rocky Bluff	
Group Camp	Briar Bottom	
Cove Creek		
Group Camp		
South White		
Pines Group		
Camp		



Tapoco Lodge Annual Meeting Hits 50 Dinner Reservations

by Tom Keene

New Saturday Afternoon Hike Added for Day Trippers

Maybe it's the beauty of the Historic Tapoco Lodge and the trails all around it! (Or maybe our members just love a good business meeting!) Whatever the cause, Dick Evans reports that at the close of the registration period 50 people had signed up (and paid!) for the Saturday evening banquet for the 2016 Annual Meeting at the Historic Tapoco Lodge in Robbinsville, NC. The whole weekend looks to being a real treat!

Just below you will find links to full information on the Lodge, the schedule of hikes, and the Annual Meeting itself on Saturday night.

One important addition to the program: **NEW Saturday afternoon hike** -- We have added a short Saturday afternoon hike for those who may drive up (or over) to Robbinsville Saturday morning and thus cannot do one of the longer hikes. **George Owen**, Hike Leader Extraordinaire, will be your guide. The hike will depart from the Historic Tapoco Lodge lobby at 2:00 PM Saturday, November 5 and will focus on the nearby Bear Creek Loop Trail including the Bear Creek Falls. The hike is just over two miles in length; George rates it Easy-to-Moderate.

Info on the Annual Meeting in previous newsletters

For general information on the meeting and the beautiful Historic Tapoco Lodge, see page four of the July 2016 newsletter:

<http://www.bmta.org/nl/BMTANewsletterJuly2016.pdf>

For the complete weekend schedule, including the hike schedule, see page four of the September 2016 Newsletter (Nota bene: This schedule does NOT include the George Owen Saturday PM hike mentioned above.)

<http://www.bmta.org/nl/BMTANewsletterSeptember2016.pdf>



The Hemlocks Lift Their Branches to You!

by Donna Shearer of SGH

For the seventh consecutive year, the Benton MacKaye Trail Association partnered with Save Georgia's Hemlocks and the U. S. Forest Service for Hike & Help the Hemlocks, an event that combines education and service in celebration of National Public Lands Day. This year's outing took place on September 24 at Fall Branch Falls and Stanley Creek near Cherry Log.

Following a short orientation and safety briefing, 23 volunteers worked in teams to treat or re-treat about 100 hemlocks. In the process, not only did the trees receive another five years of protection against the deadly insect Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA), but participants without previous experience had the chance to learn how to protect their own hemlocks. The BMTA team, led by Ralph Heller, focused on the hemlocks along the trail reroute that is currently under construction by BMTA volunteers. The reroute will relieve foot traffic on the lower end of the approach to the falls.



Ralph Artigliere, BMTA and Trout Unlimited member talking to group after treating trees

At midday everyone came together for a delicious picnic lunch and interesting lunch-and-learn presentations. Jason McGaughey (USFS) introduced the Forest Service's new Foothills Landscape Community Collaboration. BMTA member Ralph Heller and Mike Pilvinsky, BMTA Hiking Director, reported on BMTA's many trail maintenance activities and some upcoming hikes. We heard a passionate message from Ralph Artigliere (Trout Unlimited) about the complex interrelationship of the forests and waterways, particularly in regard to the impact of the hemlock canopy along trout streams. Angela DelConte brought us hopeful news about the progress of biological controls (predator beetles) being released in the forests to combat the HWA. Donna Shearer (SGH) talked about a new initiative in partnership with TU for hemlock restoration along trout streams beginning on October 15 (see http://www.savegeorgiashemlocks.org/Schedule_of_Events.htm).

Another Chance to Save Hemlocks – November 19

by Ralph Heller

Many BMTA members live in or have getaway cabins in the mountains. Even if you missed the Hike And Help The Hemlocks event in September, November 19 will again 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 as well as 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. Experience is not necessary, as small teams will be guided by Save Georgia's Hemlocks Members who are experts in treating the hemlocks.

We will be treating trees on a section of the BMT along Laurel Ridge Road with Save Georgia's Hemlocks and members of the Laurel Ridge community. We have been asked to help, since our trail follows the road on this section, and the hemlocks are in desperate need of treatment. This location is just east of where the BMT crosses Highway 515/US76. There are a number of hemlocks that need to be treated, but the treatment area is along the road. 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 on the BMT as well as enjoy the great fall weather!!

See you on November 19!!!!

Contact Ralph Heller at [rshbmta AT gmail.com](mailto:rshbmta@gmail.com) or phone # [770-235-9760](tel:770-235-9760) for meeting time/location and to register for this event.

BMTA Survey Needs You!!!

By Dick Evans

Click on this link [BMTA Survey](#)

BMTA Folks:

At a recent Board of Directors Meeting, the Board decided to start a process of examining our electronic media outlets, like the Web Page, Facebook, Twitter, etc. To that end, we have created a short survey to see how current members are using what we have. Please take a few minutes, go to this link and please complete the questions. This is only the beginning of what promises to be a long process, but we need to find out how members are using the current information before we jump into something else.

If you have burning opinions, please feel free to email me directly, at [bmta AT frontier.com](mailto:bmta@frontier.com).

Many thanks!!!!

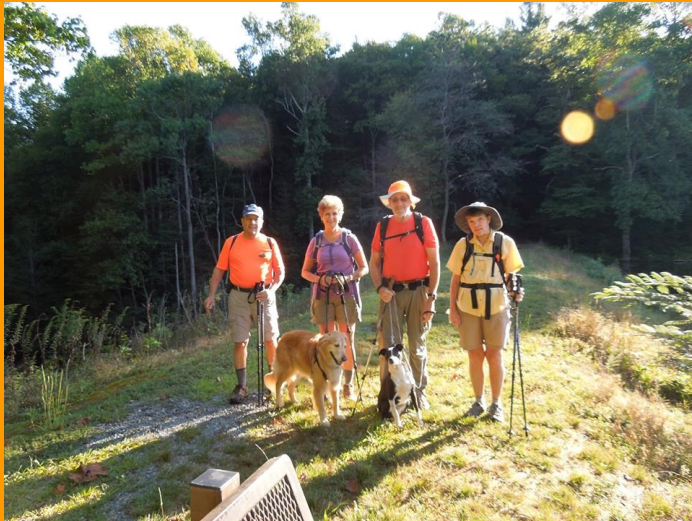
Dick Evans

Hiking Goes to the Dogs

by Mike Pilvinsky

About five years ago I joined my very first hike with BMTA. The leader was the late Betty Petty and the hike was located way back in the forest beyond Bald Creek Falls in Tennessee. Betty had invited us to camp with them but we opted to drive all the way from Ellijay that morning. I still regret not camping with Betty.

This September, we offered another camping and hiking event, but this time it also included our first dog-friendly outing in a long time. Unfortunately, participation was meager, and those who chose not to join us missed a fun filled two days, as well as magnificent weather. Ken Cissna, Artie Cissna, Beth Roberts, Mike Pilvinsky, Rick, Brenda, and Jake Harris spent two nights and two plus days at Lake Conasauga, the highest altitude lake in Georgia. Artie and Jake are dogs, and they had a great time too!



Okay-Let's get this show on the road!!



Jake, Artie & Rick post hike-just chilling with the "Human"



Glamping in style!!



Continued next page

On Wednesday, Ken and Beth hiked part of the Emery Creek Trail while the Harris family kayaked on the lake. On Thursday, all seven of us hiked to the fire tower on Grassy Mountain, the Songbird Trail, and finally the Conasauga Lake Trail, for about seven miles. Aside from the yellow jacket ambush, this hike with the dogs was little different from any other hike. Back at the lake, Ken Cissna showed us what “Glamping” was all about, with gourmet meals and all the comforts of home. This trip also allowed the Harris family to try out their new towing vehicle in preparation for their “camping sabbatical” which begins in February 2017. We all had a great time. Unfortunately, all of us had other commitments or we would have extended our stay at this hidden gem on the edge of the Cohuttas!



Pristine



Rick & Brenda-all prepared!



View from Grassy Mountain

TN/NC September Work Trip

By Ken Jones

Although the calendar said that this work trip was conducted in the “Fall,” summertime heat was still the rule of the day. The high for the day was still in the 90s, so we all had to take plenty of breaks and drink lots of fluids. Never less, nine volunteers reported for work on the Sycamore Creek Trail. This portion of the BMT encompasses Sections 17a and b, for a total length of 6.1 miles. Our goal for the day was to log out and brush out the entire length of the trail, and with everyone's help we accomplished that goal! One crew of three volunteers was shuttled to the upper trailhead with a brush cutter and chainsaw. The rest of the crew began work with brush cutters and sling blades at the lower trailhead near the Tellico Fish Hatchery. The upper crew certainly benefited from recent work to improve the old road bed/trail for fish management by TWRA. The Forest Service had cleaned out the water turnouts, and placed gravel in all of the drainages and wet spots. Of course there was very little work to do for this upper 1.5 miles of the trail. With this help, all of the trail was brushed out and 15 trees were cleared from the trail.

We were certainly glad to welcome another first time worker, Tom Carrin, to the monthly work trip. We hope that Tom enjoyed the day, and that he will join us on another work trip soon.



One of our new signs on the trail



We met a through hiker on the trail who was most appreciative of our efforts!

Thank you to the following volunteers who worked hard in some very hot conditions: Mike Kovitch, Jack Callahan, Pam Mathews, Kent Mathews, Rick Harris, Brenda Harris, Larry Van Dyke, Tom Carrin, and Ken Jones. A special thanks goes to Pam Mathews who provided the shuttle and pick up service. Without that help, we could not have completed six miles of the trail!

No More Bread Crumbs!!!

by Marge Heller

BMTA member and board secretary, Joy Forehand, and her lab, Toccoa, are regular hikers in North Georgia. She should be called BMT's "Trail Angel" for the amount of lost hikers she has rescued either by giving them directions or, in a few cases, driving folks back to their parked vehicles when the trail is longer than they thought and it's getting late in the day. For that reason, Joy called member Ralph Heller and suggested new trail signs be made and installed at the Stanley Gap trail head at Stanley Gap, the intersection of the Stanley Gap trail head to Fall Branch Falls, and the Flat Creek Loop trail head. Hopefully mileage information will enable hikers to make intelligent decisions!



Ralph took Joy's suggestion and had the three signs made. On October 17th, he and Frank Forehand installed the new mileage markers. No longer will hikers have to leave bread crumbs!!!

Into the Woods

by Mike Pilvinsky

The sky was clear and blue; the air was crisp and invigorating. On the first really chilly Saturday of autumn, Gilbert Treadwell hosted six BMTA members and two guests on a hike over his own trail maintenance section of the BMT. We met Gilbert at the intersection of Skeena Gap Road and the BMT. After introductions and a short safety briefing, we proceeded south and immediately began a steep uphill climb which soon warmed us in the breezy air. We continued with the ups and downs for about two miles to Payne Gap which was our turn-around point. Along the way, Gilbert pointed out different species of trees and plants while explaining the genesis of some of the rocks and minerals common to the Georgia Mountains.

Gilbert's section of the BMT is exceptional! What a pleasure it was to walk a well maintained leaf and pine needle covered path that is the BMT, instead of an overused highway for hikers. Although there were no long range vistas or waterfalls, everyone remarked how nice it was to walk on this section. Gilbert's narrative only added to the enjoyment of such a beautiful day in the woods!

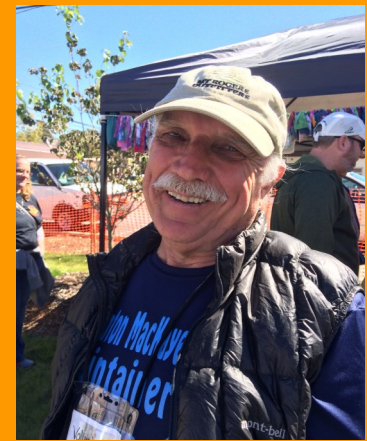


Susan Williams, Mike Pilvinsky, Lori Chaisson, Tom Sewell, Howard Baggett, Gilbert Treadwell, Ken Cissna
Photo courtesy of Walter Polk

BMTA - A SUCCESS AT FALL FESTIVALS

By Marcia Lehman

ARTS IN THE PARK - BMTA raised our tent again at the Arts in the Park festival in Blue Ridge, October 8-9. Over the course of the two days, we had 45 people actually sign our visitor log which we estimate was 60% of those stopping by our tent. Of those, 22 actually checked the box indicating their interest in doing trail maintenance...that's almost 50% of those registering!! One person wants to adopt a section of trail and two others showed an interest in volunteering to staff our tent at future events.



APPLE FESTIVAL – For the first time in many years, BMTA participated in the Apple Festival in Ellijay, GA, October 15-16. This festival attracts over 60,000 people over two weekends every fall. A total of 70 people signed our visitor log; Twenty-five indicated an interest in doing trail maintenance. With this level of success, we'll be back next year!

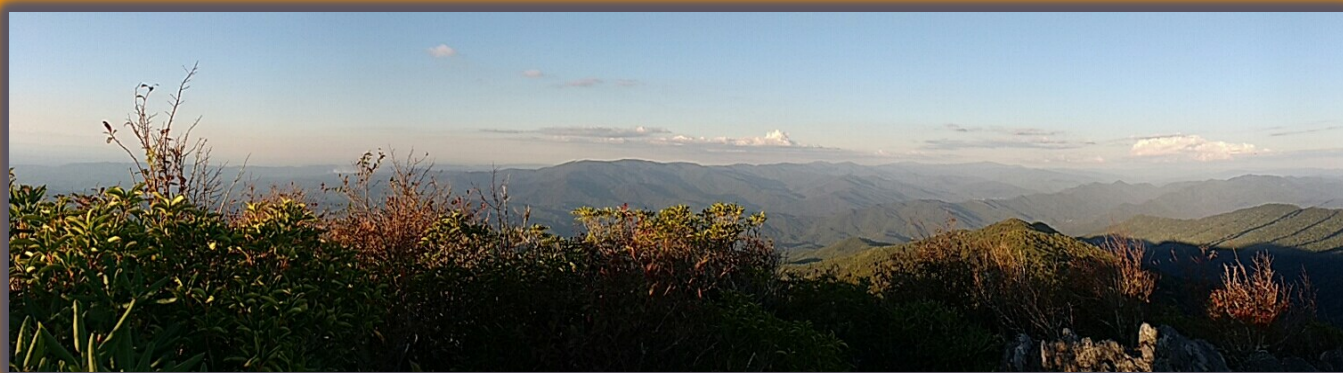
Many thanks to our volunteers who donated their time to staff our booth for these two events: Ralph Heller, Clare Sullivan, Joy and Frank Forehand, Scott Wetterhall, Ken Cissna, Larry Dumas, Tom and Jane Keene, Phil and Debra Guhl, Bob Ruby, Kathy Williams, Miriam Niemira, Hank Baudet, Lina Prince and Howard Baggett. BMTA is grateful for their efforts in signing up new members, fostering the love of hiking our beautiful mountains and interesting many in trail maintenance. Great job!!!

The next events will be in the spring of 2017. Think about volunteering your time to help your trail organization. We always need folks who can just talk to people about hiking. You do not need to be an expert on the BMT to share your enthusiasm for hiking our mountains and the need for trail maintainers to keep our trail in good shape. Further, we try to pair volunteers with experienced and BMT knowledgeable people. If interested in helping in 2017, please contact Marcia Lehman at mlehman10 AT yahoo.com.

International Recognition for the BMTA

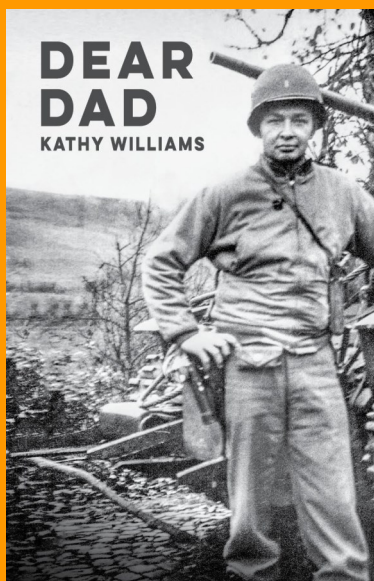
By Ralph Heller

Recently we received Trail Completion Reports submitted by thru hikers from Quebec, Canada and Barbados. In addition, we have received inquiries from Munich, Germany as well as England from persons planning on hiking the BMT next year. We also received information from the Craddock Center that a family from Holland hiking the trail stopped by the center to get some water and to chat. The Craddock Center is located on the ridge just to the west of where the BMT crosses Highway 515/US76. The trail passes through their property just north of their building. How fortunate for us that the BMT is right here!!!



BMTA Editor is also a Published Author

By Marge Heller



If you read the BMTA Newsletter regularly, then you know that Kathy Williams is our highly talented Editor producing a quality product month in and month out. But what you might not know is that Kathy recently wrote her first book, *DEAR DAD*.

DEAR DAD chronicles Kathy's father, General Judson F. Miller, experiences in WWII as a 2nd Lieutenant commanding a tank platoon. Landing in France in mid July 1944, he fought across Europe, surviving Hurtgen Forest as well as the Battle of the Bulge. After the war ended, he remained on duty later fighting in Korea as well as Vietnam. We are drawn into his personal accounting of the war through his letters home. In a unique and touching perspective, his letters are intertwined with correspondence written by Kathy to him after his death.

I have just started reading this book. Yet already I see that it captures the reader with compelling family stories of humor, tragedy and love.

Giving it a 5 Star Salute,
Marge Heller, BMTA Co-Publicity Chair

GA October Work Trip

By Barry Allen

Excuse me, but October is absolutely my favorite month. October carries with it a respite from summers' heat. It carries a warning of frost, but without the bitterness of cold seen on the horizon. October is as close to a perfect month as we can wish for – until April brings forth the colors and explosion of life missed during the winter months. Yet April can never hope to match the display seen in October.

October was our month to work Section 10. This unique section starts on a well-traveled Forest Service road, and ends in wilderness where no vehicles are allowed. Saturday October 8, we gathered at Watson Gap, planning to work one group from Watson to the Jacks River Trail. A second group would drive from Watson to Dally Gap, walking the Hemp Top trail to the BMT and then working the BMT south to the Jacks River Trail. Both groups would eventually meet at the Jacks River Trail and walk out to Dally Gap where vehicles awaited.



Debra and Phil Guhl-Armed and dangerous!

Phil and Debra Guhl led the first group -- which also included Darcy Douglas. These three were armed with a crosscut saw, loppers, ax and hand saws. The brush on this section was not a problem, but there was plenty of unruly mountain laurel and several trees laying across or in the trail. Roughly one mile into section 10, the Cohutta Wilderness takes hold, demanding an end to the use of chainsaws and brushcutters. Phil and Debra were just the ticket; our husband and wife team of certified sawyers. This day, the chainsaw was left at home in favor of the crosscut.

The second group consisted of Mike Kovitch, Ed Sullivan, Ken Cissna and myself. Our weapons of choice were sling-blades and loppers. After walking the one mile up Hemp Top to the BMT, our first task was to re-set the sign leaning against a tree at the trail intersection. Once this task was accomplished, it was brush clearing for the next two hours.

As we worked both ends against the middle, we looked forward to a late lunch on the Jacks River Trail. By 1:30, we were all enjoying a little granola with a PB and J. We had one final tree to remove – a large hemlock over the Jacks River Trail. We partnered up and took turns on this final tree of the day before walking the last mile to Dally Gap.

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One of the features I enjoy while walking/working this section are the enormous black locust trees which line the downslope side of the Hemp Top trail. While the black locust is certainly not rare, mature specimens are just not a common tree to see in the oak/hickory forests dominating much of our Georgia trail. Yet it is suited to the edge of the Hemp Top trail – an old jeep road with just enough openness to allow the locust tree to reach large size before being crowded out. The craggy bark and signature shelf lichens are quite a site along this stretch of trail. Hope to see you all next month as we work Section 11!



Best laid plans of mice and men



Safety meeting



I think my fat cells are crying



You should have seen the tree that got away!

TN/NC October Work Trip

by Barry Allen

After an early season work stoppage on Forest Service lands near the historic Trail of Tears, this month's trip proved to be a make-up for an earlier postponement; it was our first opportunity of the year to work Section 15b --Six Mile to Tate Gap. At one end of this section are the ruins of old Doc Roger's home at Tate Gap; at the other end of Section 15b is Six Mile Gap, a steep ascent up Waucheesi Mountain and access to the Warrior's Passage Trail. The half mile ascent up the mountain is not part of the BMT, but is used as an access point for working or walking the trail. It is certainly well worth the beautiful drive to the top of Waucheesi (the road is in great shape) and the hike to the trail.

On a cool, breezy October morning, our work team gathered in Coker Creek prior to the drive up Waucheesi Mountain. We were pleased to have four Boy Scouts and their leader, Carlos Nicho, from the Knoxville area. Also joining us from Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee were seven students from the Environmental Club, organized by senior Ridge Sliger. In addition to the Scouts and the college students, we were lucky to have Clare and Ed Sullivan co-leading the work group. Also attending was Al Peebles, a member from the Murphy, North Carolina area who has been a frequent work attendee this summer.



Group of Incredibles!

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Having a large group was a true blessing on this day. There were plenty of jobs to go around for the sixteen people who showed up to work on this October morning: Clare Sullivan along with two Scouts and two students worked to re-blaze the 1.6 mile section of trail; Ed Sullivan managed a three man team removing all blowdowns and leaners along the section of trail. I took everyone else, armed them well with sling blades and loppers, and removed brush and briars along the path. At the end of the day, the brush and the blowdowns were gone, gone, gone. And the majority of the 1.6 miles now boasts some of the finest looking blazes anywhere. Thanks to all involved: a truly great day on the trail!



What in the Blazes!!

Notes of interest on this section: on the hike down from Waucheesi Mountain, prior to reaching the BMT, there are a couple of American Chestnut trees that are producing nuts. Of course, the trees are blight damaged, but they are large enough to produce chestnuts and seemed to have a decent crop this year. This section is also home to a healthy population of Southern Shagbark Hickory along Cantrell Top, which also produced a good crop of delicious hickory nuts this year. **This section of trail needs a section maintainer.** It is in great shape now, but needs a person to walk and work it a couple of times during the year. Please contact the TN/NC maintenance director if you would like to help out with this challenge. And finally: Thanks to Ken Jones for taking a well-deserved trip with his wife to Washington DC, giving me an excuse to venture up to Tennessee for a lovely Saturday drive.



Group break at Doc Roger's Home at Tate Gap

Coming Again!! Winter Hike Week in the Smokies January 19-22, 2017 Sponsored by SEFTC

Many of you have in past years enjoyed the winter hiking experience during Wilderness Wildlife Week in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The tradition continues. Under the auspices of the Southeastern Foot Trails Coalition (SEFTC), the second annual Winter Hike Week will be held January 19-22 in Pigeon Forge, TN.

Several hikes ranging from easy to strenuous will be held each day, beginning on Thursday, the 19th, and concluding on Sunday, the 22nd. Participants are urged to arrive on Wednesday afternoon, if possible, to take advantage of the full hike schedule. All hikes will be led by hike leaders familiar with the GSMNP trails. There is a \$25 charge by SEFTC for the event, whether you are there one day or all days. This goes to fund SEFTC's hiking and foot trails program. The SEFTC will hold its annual meeting for SEFTC board members and leadership council members on Saturday. For those not participating in that meeting, a full hiking schedule is provided Saturday.

For all the details and to register please go to the **Southeastern Foot Trails Coalition** website <http://www.southeasternfoottrails.org>. On the opening page click on the icon in the upper right for the "Winter Hiking Event" to access information and registration.

If winter hiking in the Smokies is new to you, it is actually not that strange. For some it is even the preferred season, with the smallest crowds. Ice and snow is usually not a problem, with significant snow collection mainly at the highest elevations. Usually January hikers can hike most days at lower elevations, where most of our treks occur. Should heavy snows occur, alternative low elevation flatter hikes may be substituted.

SEFTC is planning for well over a hundred people for this event. In 2016 SEFTC held this event successfully for the first time, and plans to make it an annual January occasion.

So make your special winter hiking plans now for the January 2017 SEFTC Winter Hike Week in America's most visited national park by going to the SEFTC website and registering and reserving your inn or hotel room as instructed there!



Upcoming Hikes

by Mike Pilvinsky Hiking Director

Annual Meeting Hikes November 4, 5 & 6 at Tapoco Lodge

◆ **Friday November 4**

3:00 PM – Hike #1 Carpool to Old Field Gap Road and hike Bearpen Gap Section of the BMT: 1.8 miles, mostly downhill, rated Easy. Trip Leader – Dick Evans. Return to Tapoco Lodge around 5:00 PM

◆ **Saturday November 5**

8:30 AM – Hike #2 Carpool to Big Fat Gap and hike to the Hangover: 7 mile round trip, 2,000 foot elevation gain, rated Strenuous. Return to Lodge about 3:30 PM. Hike Leader – Dick Evans

8:30 AM – Hike #3 Carpool to Fontana Village and hike the Yellow Creek Mountain Section of the BMT to Old Field Gap Road: 7.5 miles with a steep section at the beginning. Rated Moderate+. Return to Lodge about 4:00 PM. Trip Leaders – Keith Mertz and Ellie Douty

9:00 AM – Trip #1 Carpool to visit Yellow Creek Falls (3/8 mile, rated Easy), visit Wehrloom Honey in Robbinsville. Lunch in the Hub Restaurant in Robbinsville. Travel to Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest and hike the Memorial Forest Trail: 1.2 – 2 miles. Rated Easy+. See the fabled “Big Trees” in the first permanently protected wilderness in the world. Visit Maple Springs Observation Point. Return to Lodge about 4:00 PM. Trip Leaders–Kim Hainge and George Owen

NEW Saturday afternoon Hike–2:00 PM hike the nearby Bear Creek Loop Trail including Bear Creek Falls. The hike is just over 2 miles in length. Rated Easy-to-Moderate.

◆ **Sunday – November 6th (Remember to set your clock back)**

8:30 AM – Hike #4 Carpool to Big Fat Gap and hike the BMT into the Slickrock Wilderness, thru Nichols Cove and over Yellow Hammer Gap to return to the Lodge. 5.8 miles, rated Moderate. Return to Lodge about 2:00 PM. Trip Leader – Dick Evans

8:30 AM – Hike #5 Drive on your own to the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest and explore on your way home. We’ll provide maps.

8:30 AM – Trip #2 Drive to Fontana Dam and see the highest dam east of the Mississippi (on your own). We’ll provide maps.

9:00 AM – Hike #6 Hike the Bear Creek Falls Trail, about 2 miles, rated Moderate. See a small waterfall on the scenic Cheoah River. Trip Leader – Kim Hainge

9:00 AM – Hike #7 Hike the Tapoco Trail/BMT to Yellow Hammer Gap, then the historic Belding Trail and finally the Bear Creek Falls Trail. 8 Miles, rated Moderate +. Trip Leader – Pending

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November 19- Hike the BMT and AT in Three Forks Springer area

Sierra Club and Benton MacKaye Trail Association are co-sponsoring a hike on the Benton MacKaye and Appalachian Trails in the Three Forks/Springer Mountain area. We will start at Three Forks and hike up the BMT to the second crossing with the AT, then switch to the AT for the trip back. After a stop at the Stover Creek shelter on the AT for lunch, we will continue back to Three Forks and then head up to Long Creek Falls. The total hike will be 8+ miles and take approximately 5 hours. Pace will be moderate. The number of participants on this hike will be limited so reserve your place early. Priority to BMTA and SC members. Register with Ken Cissna at kcissna@AT.usf.edu.



"A good leader blames his subordinates for their success and takes full credit for all their failures."

FROM THE HIKING DIRECTOR:

As I finish my year as the hike director I must thank those of you who volunteered to lead hikes. You are our hiking program, and the hikers appreciate it. I was particularly pleased this year that a few trail maintainers led hikes over their own sections of the BMT. You lend a trail familiarity that otherwise does not exist. I would also like to encourage other hikers to step up to the challenge and lead a hike over your favorite trail. Please contact our new and very capable hiking director, Ken Cissna, if you would like to lead a hike. We will be there to help you every step of the way.

Every hiker I speak to has been enthused to see the BMTA offering more and varied hiking activities. It is my hope that the BMTA will not allow itself to become a one trick pony but continue to offer many activities that will appeal to hikers and maintainers with a wide variety of experience, skills, and fitness levels.

See you on the trail! Mike

Due to Thanksgiving the Newsletter Deadline is Sunday Nov 20!!!!
Thank you all for your great articles!! They really make our Newsletter special!!

Please be advised that AT&T and BellSouth have been blocking all emails from BMTA.org.
 You will need to contact them to allow emails from BMTA.org.