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BMTA Officers 2016-2017

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



BMTA Headquarters



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OCTOBER 2017

President's Column

October 2017

by Tom Keene

The Annual Meeting:

New Directions to be Considered at Vogel

The BMTA annual meeting weekend is always a treat, a chance to see old friends, share a good meal, take a good hike (or two!), catch up on trail developments, and, especially, honor our hard-working volunteers.

The 2017 meeting will be no exception.

But this year we will also consider some important strategic initiatives that could fundamentally change how we approach maintaining our 293-mile trail. These initiatives arise in part from efforts to address the chronic shortage of volunteers to maintain remote sections of the trail in Tennessee and North Carolina. The new approaches also arise from the increasing complexity of our work and the developing character of our relationship with the United States Forest Service.

These important discussions will begin during the Annual All-Members Business Meeting beginning at **5:00 PM on Friday, November 3**, in the Vogel Group Shelter. They will continue in the same venue when we hear from our after-dinner speaker from the Forest Service, **Dr. Kelly Balcarczyk**. Dr. Balcarczyk currently serves as Manager for Volunteer and Service Programs for the Southern Region of the Forest Service headquartered in Atlanta. We look forward to her remarks and the discussion to follow.

I hope you will be able to join us annual meeting weekend, certainly for these important discussions, but also for all the fellowship, the fascinating park history, and the many beautiful trails in the **Vogel – Blood Mountain** area.

For details, including the complete hike list, see page two for an article by **Darcy Douglas**, Coordinator of the 2017 Annual Meeting.

Also, don't miss **Barry Allen's** celebration on page five, with photos (!), of the heroic efforts of BMTA volunteers to clear BMT Sections 1 through 11 following Hurricane Irma and other recent wind events.

2017 BMTA ANNUAL MEETING HIKES

by Darcy Douglas

For all these, remember to bring plenty of water to drink, lunch and snacks, rain gear and dress in layers for the weather including sturdy shoes or boots! A set of dry clothes in the car just in case is often a good idea. Please be at the assigned location about 15 minutes prior to the time listed so carpools and shuttles can be arranged.

Any revisions will be sent to those registered for the weekend via email! Contact Darcy if questions at bmtadarcy AT yahoo.com.

Friday, November 3

Meet in the **parking lot at Vogel State Park** near the lake and across the road from the Visitor's Center 15 minutes prior to the allotted time. Hikes will leave as below:

Hike #1 – Leaving parking lot at 1:30 p.m. In Vogel State Park hike around lake including falls and nature loop trail (easy, ca. 2 miles) Leader: Bob Ruby

Hike #2 – Leaving parking lot at 11:30 a.m. Bear Hair Trail out of Vogel – moderate loop, side trail to vista (moderate, 4 miles) Leader: Ken Cissna

Hike #3 – Leaving parking lot at 1:00 p.m. Byron Herbert Reese parking to Mountain Crossings and return (includes AT store) (moderate, 3.5 miles) Leader: Mike Pilvinsky

Saturday, November 4

Hike #4 – Leaving Blairsville Park and Ride at 9:00 a.m. Leave the Trailhead on 60 at 9:20 a.m. Skeenah Creek at Hwy. 60 on BMT to Toccoa River swinging bridge and return (moderately strenuous, 7.2 miles) - Leaders: Phil and Deborah Guhl

Hike #5 - Leaving Blairsville Park and Ride at 9:30 a.m. Leave Jack's Gap Parking at 9:15 a.m. Some trails of Brasstown Bald – Trail to summit and back and Wagon Train Trail to second overlook then return (moderate, 5 miles) Leader: George Owen

Hike #6 – Leaving Blairsville Park and Ride at 10:00 a.m. Leave the northeast corner of 180 and 19 intersection at 10:10 a.m. Waterfall Trek – Helton Creek Falls and two DeSoto Falls (easy, ca. 3 miles, add Vogel Lake Falls for 3.9 miles) Leader: Ken Cissna

Hike #7 – Leaving Blairsville Park and Ride at 9:30 a.m. Leave Byron Herbert Reese Parking area at 9:45 a.m. Blood Mountain Loop from Byron Herbert Reese parking (strenuous, 6.4 miles) Leader: David Blount

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Sunday, November 5
There was a time change last night!!

Hike #8 – Leaving Blairsville Park and Ride at 9:00 a.m. Leaving Springer Mountain Parking area on FS 42 at 9:40 a.m. Springer Mountain two upper loops of AT, BMT (moderate, 6.0 miles) Leader: George Owen

Hike #9 – Leaving Blairsville Park and Ride at 9:00 a.m. Leaving Mountain Crossings at Neel's Gap at 9:15 with special permission Appalachian Trail from Tesnatee Gap to Neels Gap (strenuous, 6.0 miles) Leader: Darcy Douglas

2018 Membership Renewal Period Now Open

by Ralph Heller – Membership Director

Heads up!

The enrollment period for 2018 is now open!

Membership is on a calendar year basis – January 1 through December 31.

This means that, technically, after December 31 your previous year's membership has expired if not renewed by that time. Since we are now using the calendar year for membership renewal, it should be easier to remember when to renew and know your membership status. All memberships renewed after October of this year will be good for 2018. If this year's membership experience did not meet your expectations please let us know. In order to avoid forgetting to renew your membership during the busy and distracting Christmas/New Year holidays, we suggest you renew in November or early December. PayPal is the easiest method to renew. Click [here](#) for more details.



BMTA 2017-2018 Board Nominees

BMTA Nominating Committee for 2018 Officers

Slate of Proposed Nominees

Nominating Committe Members:

Tom Keene, Joy Forehand, Dick Evans, Ralph Heller, Ken Cissna and Darcy Douglas

Position	2017 Holder	Yrs. In Service	2018 Nominee
President	Tom Keene	1	Tom Keene
Vice President	Dick Evans	1	George Owen
Secretary	Joy Forehand	4	Joy Forehand
Treasurer	Margaret Evans	5	Margaret Meadows
GA Maintenance	Barry Allen	3	Barry Allen
TN/NC Maintenance	Ken Jones	2	*FTF
Smokies Coordinator	Dick Evans	3	Larry Dumas
Membership	Ralph Heller	1	Darcy Douglas
Publicity	Marge Heller & Marcia Lehman	2	Jeff DePaola
Conservation	Pete Busscher	2	Pete Busscher
Hiking	Ken Cissna	1	Ken Cissna
Past President	Bob Ruby	1	Bob Ruby
State Rep: GA	Larry Dumas	2	Appointed by '18 Pres
State Rep: TN/NC	Rick Harris	5	Appointed by '18 Pres
Newsletter Editor	Kathy Williams	N/A (3)	Kathy Williams – Appointed by Board

*FTF –From the Floor at the Annual Meeting: The Nomination Committee is currently seeking interested and qualified members for the TN/NC Maintenance Director. Nominations for this position can be made from the floor at BMTA's Annual Meeting.



October Work Trip Report

by Barry Allen / Photos courtesy Phil Guhl, Mike Kovitch and Ralph Heller

The last month or so has been a blur. Since Hurricane Irma hit in September our membership has responded with everything I have asked of them and more. BMTA volunteers have recorded 11 trips on eight separate dates to remove storm damage from various sections of the trail. Thirty-one volunteers have made at least one trip to help with storm clean-up; many of these folks have been on multiple trips. Five volunteers – Robert Collins, George Owen, Phil Guhl, Bob Cowdrick, and Ben Yaun – have recorded more than 20 volunteer hours on storm clean-up. In fact, one volunteer has already earned his T-shirt for the year with 35 hours devoted to storm clean-up. Thanks Ben!

Our sawyers have been outstanding. Robert Collins, Phil Guhl, Steve Bayliss, Bob Cowdrick, Gilbert Treadwell, Russ Johnson, Ed Sullivan and Mark Yost have all run teams to clear trees from the trail. All have done a great job of keeping people safe on the worksite. Well done! Well done!

Every person who has volunteered to drag trees and limbs from the trail has done so with remarkable attitudes and great humor. It has been a pleasure to work with everyone. I have enjoyed every minute on the trail. We have one tough section left to log – Section 3 on October 28th. Once done, the trail will be in better shape than before the September storm.

Let me leave you all with a collection of pictures and a sobering total of volunteer hours devoted to storm clean-up in the past few weeks: **429 volunteer hours from September 16 through October 21.**

Thanks to you all!





Arts and Paws in the Park



Hank Baudet, Lina Prince, Jeff DePaola and Ralph Heller with the "Donation Boot"
Photo by Jason Beck/THE NEWS OBSERVER



We continue to create awareness of the Benton MacKaye Trail with our participation in local festivals including Arts in the Park in Blue Ridge and the Apple Festival in Ellijay. Volunteers not only enjoyed spreading the word about the trail but were also able to take in the many festival activities.

We were even seen at Paws in the Park in Blue Ridge where Ralph Heller put on his BMTA finery, strolling the park with man's best friend, Schatzi, who also dazzled in her own BMTA wardrobe. This chic twosome generated admiring glances sparking conversations about the trail.

Arts in the Park

Ralph & Marge Heller
Hank Baudet
Lina Prince
Jason Beck
Art Meyer
Clare Sullivan
Ben Yaun
Jeff DePaola

Apple Festival

Howard Baggett
Larry Dumas
Tom & Jane Keene
Tom Johnson
Barry Allen
Darcy Douglas
Ken Cissna

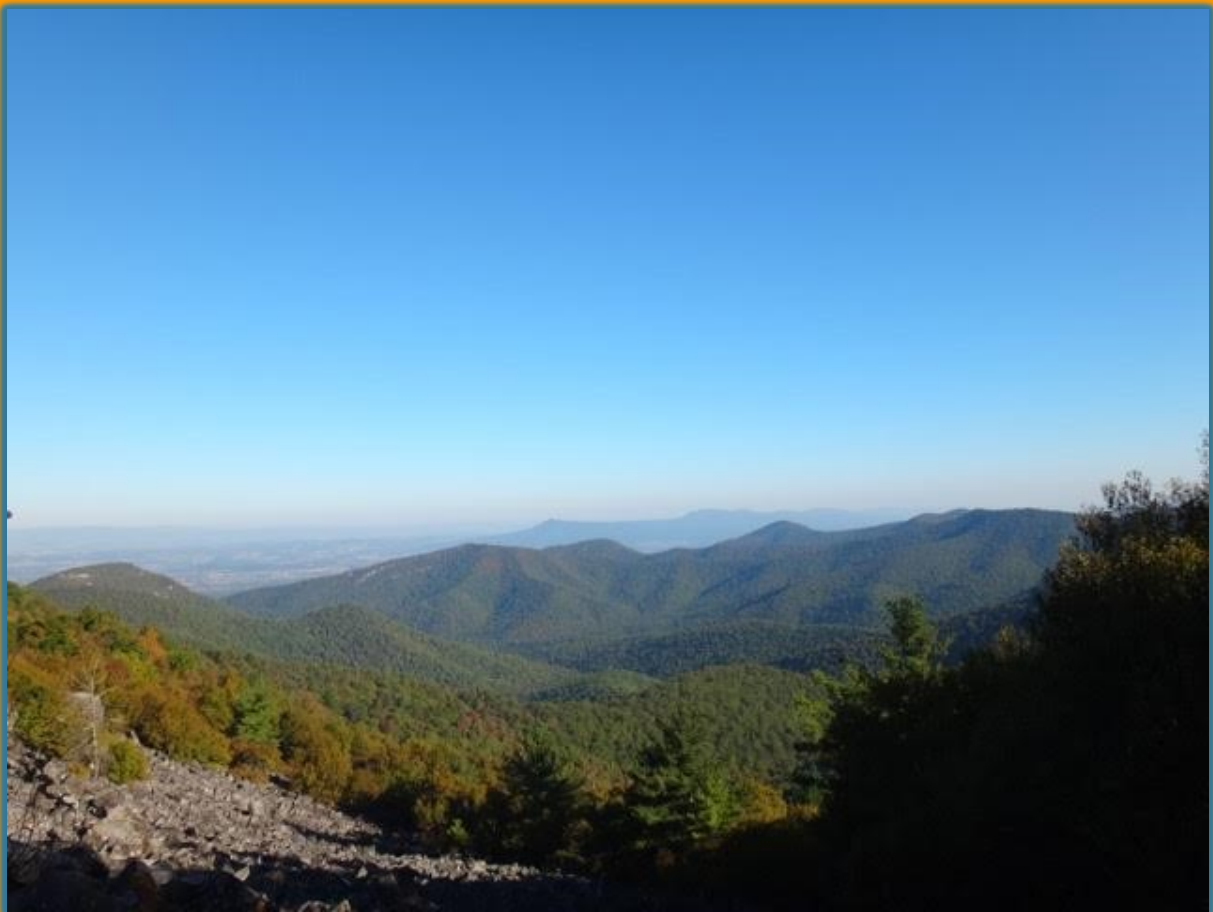
THANK YOU!!!

BMTA Members Hike Shenandoah National Park

by Mike Pilvinsky

On Monday, October 2, 2017, four BMTA members began hiking the Appalachian Trail where it winds atop the ridge lines along the Skyline Drive in Shenandoah National Park in Virginia.

After spending the night in a campground in Waynesboro, VA, we drove into the park and began hiking north. After about 30 minutes on the trail we startled a black bear about 20 feet off the trail. Soon afterward a snake crossed the trail in the middle of our group and later that day we found deer near our campsite. During the next six days of hiking we saw more deer, a large black racer, rabbits and Mike Pilvinsky had a close encounter with a beautiful bobcat. For six days the weather was perfect. Each day the splendor of the leaves became more brilliant.



Later in the week we were joined by our fifth BMTA member, Tammy Smith, from Robbinsville, NC who hiked with us for the next three days. One night we checked into the famous Skyland Lodge along Skyline Drive and enjoyed a hot shower, great food and slept between clean sheets.

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BMTA members Bob Brown, Mike Pilvinsky, Dick Evans, Gilbert Treadwell, and Tammy Smith stop at a hut along the Appalachian Trail in Shenandoah National Park.



Gilbert Treadwell, Dick Evans and Bob Brown in the middle of a "Rock River."



Gilbert Treadwell and one of 1000 magnificent views.



Gilbert Treadwell follows the AT as it winds thru a "Rock River."



Bobcat!!

Our goal was to hike the entire length of the AT in the Shenandoah National Park, about 100 miles. Unfortunately, Tropical Storm Nate caused us to change our plans. Sleeping out in a small tent or hanging in a hammock through a tropical storm with driving rain and 45 mph winds was not fun. However, the first six days and nights on the trail were magnificent. We have to be thankful for the wonderful experience we had and hope to return next fall to finish our hike.

Rainbow Falls

by Kathy Williams

It was a bright crisp morning when eight hikers set out to discover Rainbow Falls located in the Cherokee National Forest just off the gorge forged by the Ocoee River in Tennessee. We met in Ducktown and the first treat of our hike was shuttling to the trailhead. Our shuttle, the “Hiker Hauler,” driven by Ed Sullivan, accommodated all of us. He took us past the Ocoee Whitewater Center and then meandered along the Ocoee River. This is one of my favorite scenic drives with the river on one side and the mountains rising up as sheer cliffs on the other.



Ed Sullivan, Ralph Henning, Teri Henning, Kathleen Kelly, Joe Kelly, Irene Moore and Lisa Steiner after a successful shuttle in the “Hiker Hauler.”

The trail takes you along a creek with two water crossings. Ed Sullivan was excellent in pointing out areas of interest that included one place where a “Lost Rock” came to rest beside the trail as well as where the trail had served as a fire break during last year’s fires. One side of the trail had burned trees; the other side was burn free.

Continued next page



Successfully traversing the first of two water crossings.



The trail did not disappoint with new wonders at each turn.

We rested and snacked at the falls and then returned to our “Hiker Hauler.” As we hiked back Ed educated us on the eco-friendly natural toilet paper available. He reminded us that this also saved us valuable space in our backpacks!





Proper use of eco-friendly toilet paper-the Mountain Magnolia.



Partridge berry mixed in with ground cedar.

As we journeyed back we stopped at the Ocoee Whitewater Center and Boyd Overlook. Both Ed and Clare Sullivan volunteer at the Whitewater Center.



It just does not get any better than this!!!

November Work Trip Announcement

by Barry Allen

- ◆ **Where:** Section3a
- ◆ **When:** Saturday, November 11, 2017
- ◆ **Meet:** 8:00 at Iron Bridge Café, 8436 Aska Road in Blue Ridge or 9:00 at GA 60 across from Forest Service Road to Swinging Bridge (please call or e-mail if you need exact directions)
- ◆ **Plan for the Day:** Replacement of steps on Section 3, north of Little Skeenah Creek
- ◆ **What to bring:** Minimum two liters of water, long pants, boots, gloves and snack or lunch for the day.
- ◆ **Contact:** Barry Allen at bmtabarry AT gmail.com or 770-294-7384

Please join us on Saturday, November 9, as we work Section 3 at Little Skeenah Creek. Our plan for the day is to replace approximately 24 steps on Section 3 about a quarter of a mile north of Little Skeenah Creek.

The work will involve hauling ten 6x6 pressure treated timbers from GA 60 to the work site. Once at the site we will remove existing log steps, prep the site and install new 6x6 timbers.

We hope to have several college students on this trip to help carry material but the more people who turn out for the event, the fewer trips each team will need to make. Round trip from GA 60 is about a half-mile for each four-man mule team.

In addition to carrying material to the site, our work will be with Pulaski, trail hoe and shovels as we remove old steps, level the site and install new steps.

Hope to see you there!

P.S. -- Material for this project is courtesy of Thrivent Financial and the care, generosity and time of one of our volunteers! See more details in the November newsletter.



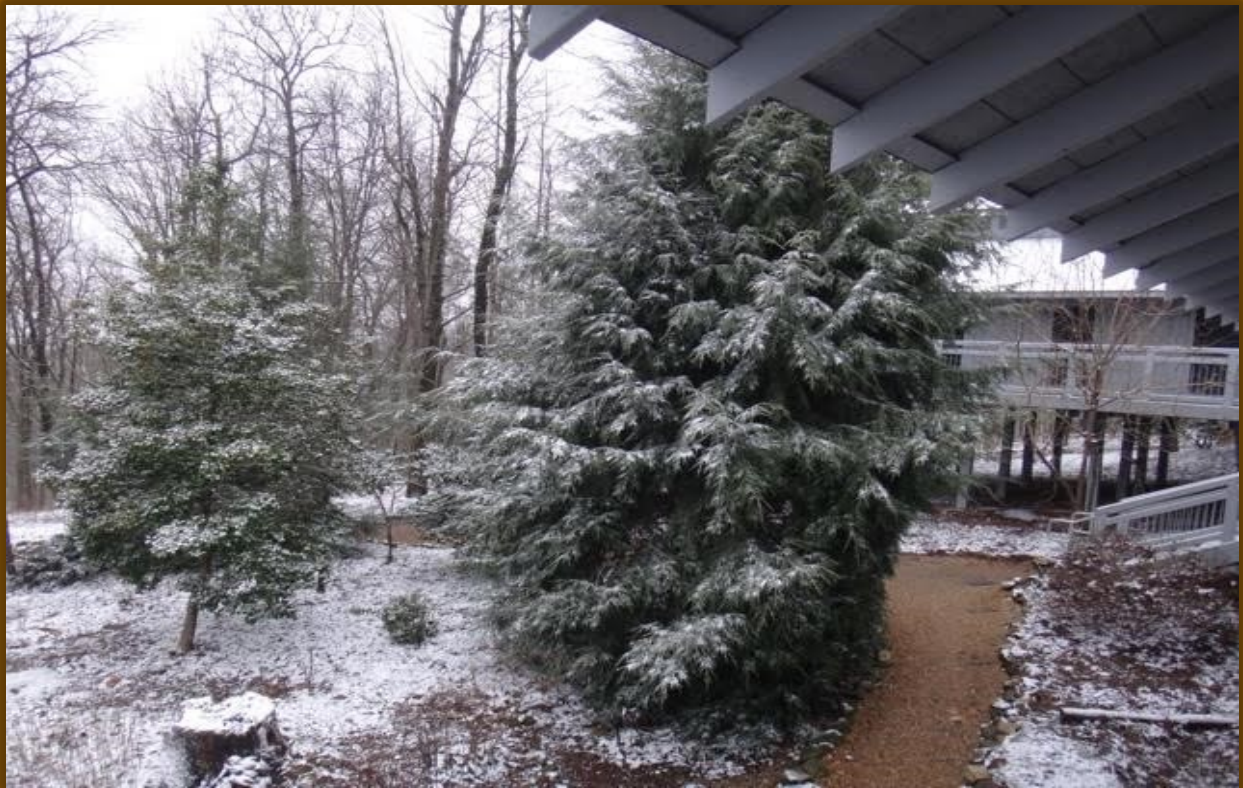
AmazonSmile Benefits BMTA

If you are going to make purchases from Amazon during the holiday season or any other time, please use this address:

BMTA's unique link is [http:// smile.amazon.com/ch/58-1428009](http://smile.amazon.com/ch/58-1428009).

If you do so, Amazon will direct a small share of your purchases to BMTA. A convenient way to do this is to click on the link and then bookmark that page on your toolbar or wherever you keep hiking links.

Save the Date-Hike Inn BMTA to Len Foote Hike Inn February 27, 2018 Half-Price for Members



Upcoming Hikes

by Ken Cissna, Hiking Director

BMTA normally schedules a minimum of two hikes per month, one of five to eight miles and moderate difficulty, and one that is shorter and easier. In addition, we have occasional backpacking hikes and more difficult ones that might be called “hardy hikes.” Occasionally we co-sponsor hikes with other organizations. Although more hikes are in Georgia than the other states, you will find hikes in all three BMT states: Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee.

If you are interested in leading a hike or have a hike you’d like to see us offer with someone else leading, please contact me at [kcissna AT usf.edu](mailto:kcissna@usf.edu) or 706-636-1741.

The hikes for the next two months are listed below. With fall on the horizon, we are entering prime hiking season. More hikes will be forthcoming, so check the Activities Calendar of the website and next month’s newsletter for updates. Enjoy.

November

November 1st (Wednesday) Etowah/Boling Park – version #2

This is a follow up hike to one we held in this trail system earlier in the year; this hike will take almost all entirely different trails.

5.5 miles, average to moderate

Contact hike leader Howard Baggett at [howardeb AT windstream.net](mailto:howardeb@windstream.net)

November 3, 4, 5th (Friday, Saturday, Sunday) Annual meeting—nine hikes in or near Vogel State Park. These hikes have their own story ([click here](#)) in the Newsletter.

November 18th (Saturday) Unicoi Turnpike Trail to BMT in TN and out westward to Hwy. 68. 7 miles, moderate – includes some of the "Trail of Tears" on the UTT

Contact hike leader George Owen at [gowen2 AT tds.net](mailto:gowen2@tds.net)

December

December 2nd (Saturday) Raven Cliff Falls.

6 miles, moderate, in and out.

We will pass several other falls on this hike. The falls shoot through a cliff and the water falls 170 feet.

Contact hike leader Larry Dumas at [ledumas AT hotmail.com](mailto:ledumas@hotmail.com)

November Newsletter deadline is November 15, 2017. Thank you!