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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



VOLUME 34, ISSUE 9

SEPTEMBER 2017

President's Column September 2017

by Tom Keene

ANNUAL MEETING WEEKEND ~ NOV. 3, 4 & 5



Register NOW. Don't miss the Fun!

For Hike, Meeting and Social details see Darcy's article on the next page.

Hurricane IRMA: Get Off Our Trail!



"This one's just a sapling. You should have seen the other one!"
Ben Yaun near Big Stamp

Hurricane Irma passed over the Benton MacKaye Trail September 11-13. It goes without saying that we got off light compared to folks on the islands and in coastal areas. Still, the hurricane got our attention too.

Trail volunteers like **George Owen** and **Joy Forehand** went out almost immediately to assess the damage. Not surprisingly the heaviest damage came on the southern end of the trail where the storm hit the mountains first.

Here's Georgia Maintenance Director **Barry Allen's** response to a request for an overview:

"Sections 1, 2 and 3 were BY FAR the hardest hit by the storm. Other sections have trees down, but nothing like the problems from Springer to Skeenah Gap. One drive up or down Winding Stair Gap on the way to Big Stamp Gap is an eye opener. Big oaks down all over."

Sawyer teams including **Barry Allen, George Owen, Robert Collins, Mark Yost, Steve Bayliss and Ben Yaun** (and others, I'm sure) went to work. They prioritized the most popular sections of trail, Springer Mountain to Three Forks and Skeenah Creek to the Swinging Bridge. Within a week those sections were clear but Barry predicted it would take at least until the end of October to get Sections 1, 2, and 3 completely clear.

JOIN US FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING!!!

by Darcy Douglas

All members and friends are welcome to attend the annual meeting. We usually have a business meeting which includes elections, awards, a group dinner and a speaker. We will also have items from our store for sale without the cost of shipping added in! Bring cash or checks for this, please. In 2017 these events will be held at Vogel State Park in North Georgia on Friday, November 3. In addition, there are hikes scheduled for Friday, all day Saturday and all day Sunday. The hikes are of varying difficulties and lengths with something for everyone! The Friday hikes will meet at Vogel but the others may meet elsewhere since there is a fee for entering Vogel State Park (bring your park passes or \$5 for this fee). There will be a social gathering Saturday at 5:00 at the Keene's spot at Blood Mountain Cabins nearby.

What you DO need to do is get on the website, bmta.org (click [HERE](#)) and register for the Friday evening meal. There is a choice of main dishes. **NO MEALS CAN BE PURCHASED AT THE DOOR. We are having the Friday meal catered. **October 31 will be the last day to sign up for the meal on the website. Hike details on are the next page.****

Look at previous newsletters for additional information and options for places to stay. Please contact me, Darcy, at [bmtadarcy AT yahoo.com](mailto:bmtadarcy@yahoo.com) if you have further questions!!

HOPE TO SEE YOU NOVEMBER 3-5, 2017!!!!



2017 BMTA ANNUAL MEETING HIKES

by George Owen

NOTE: *An asterisk * indicates limited to 12 because in wilderness.*

FRIDAY, NOV. 3 (All hikes leave from Vogel State Park lakeside parking lot across from welcome center)

Hike #1 - In Vogel State Park hike around lake including falls and nature loop trail (easy ca. 2 mi.)
Leader: Bob Ruby

Hike #2 - *Bear Hair Trail out of Vogel - moderate loop, side trail to vista (moderate, 4 mi.) Leader: Ken Cissna

Hike #3 - *Byron Herbert Reese parking to Mountain Crossings and return (includes AT store) (moderate, 3.5 mi.) Leader: Mike Pilvinsky

Note: Saturday and Sunday hikes will all be morning hikes.

SATURDAY, NOV. 4

Hike #1 - Skeenah Creek at Hwy. 60 on BMT to Toccoa River swinging bridge and return (moderately strenuous, 7.2 mi.) Leaders: Phil & Debra Guhl

Hike #2 - *Some Trails of Brasstown Bald - Trail to summit and back and Wagon Train Trail to second overlook and return (moderate, 5 mi.) Leader: George Owen

Hike #3 - Waterfalls Trek - Helton Creek Falls and two DeSoto Falls (easy, ca. 3 mi., add Vogel Lake Falls for 3.9 mi.) Leader: Ken Cissna

Hike #4 - *Blood Mountain Loop from Byron Herbert Reese parking (strenuous, 6.4 mi.) Leader: Mike Pilvinsky

SUNDAY, NOV. 5

Hike #1 - Springer Mountain two upper loops of AT, BMT (moderate, 6.0 mi.) Leader: George Owen

Hike #2 - *Appalachian Trail from Tesnatee Gap to Neels Gap (strenuous, 6.0 mi) Leader: Darcy Douglas

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.



TN/NC Monthly Work Trip - August 26, 2017

by Ken Jones

As the days in August go we picked a good one with low relative humidity. A lot of volunteers took advantage of the nice weather with 16 of us working on the trail. Our goal for the day was to brush out Section 12a-Dry Pond Lead Trail intersection to the Kimsey Highway crossing point. This section of the BMT has about half of its 2.7 mile length in a Wilderness Study Area adjacent to the Little Frog Wilderness. With the help of a number of our Georgia members working the wilderness area and the Tennessee members working with power tools outside the wilderness, we were able to accomplish our goal for the day. This section of trail was logged out in May and luckily there were no new blow downs since that logout. In addition to our goal for the day we also brushed out the portion of the Dry Pond Lead Trail that is not a part of the BMT. We were also able to again brush out the logged over portion of Section 12c and paint three new blazes to assist hikers in navigating the twists and turns of this wide open sunny spot on our trail. At the end of the day the workers were treated to a helping of cold watermelon.



Here is the crew before starting our work for the day, minus Phyllis the photographer.

Those of us attempting to maintain the TN/NC portion of the trail in an acceptable condition really appreciate the volunteers from Georgia who came up for the day to help. For many who came, it was a real sacrifice to drive as far as they did. Without their help we could never have accomplished the goal of clearing this entire section.

It was great to have a first time volunteer, Jim Herrig, working with us. Jim is recently retired from the Cherokee National Forest where he served as the "Fish Expert" for the forest. Thanks go to the following volunteers who made this another safe and productive work trip: Rick Harris, Brenda Harris, Ed Sullivan, Claire Sullivan, Ken Jones, Phyllis Jones, Larry Dumas, Boe Rudder, Ralph Van Pelt, Darcy Douglas, Ben Yaun, Frank Forehand, Jim Herrig, Steve Bayliss, Barry Allen, and George Owen.

Fall Festivals – Need Volunteers

by Marcia Lehman

The fall festivals are coming up quickly and again we need your help to promote BMTA and hiking in general. Our active participation in these events, combined with our enthusiastic volunteers, have generated great publicity for the Benton MacKaye Trail, gained new trail maintainers and added to our BMTA membership.

You don't have to be an expert on BMTA or hiking to greet people and show your enthusiasm for hiking to man the tent during the event. The tent will be stocked with numerous BMTA materials, hiking maps and other valuable information for those who stop by. There are multiple shifts for each day, so, if you have a couple of hours to spare on any of these dates, please contact Marcia Lehman, Co-Chair BMTA Publicity at mlehman10 AT yahoo.com or 404-229-6058.

The schedule of events:

Arts in the Park in Blue Ridge, GA October 14-15

Apple Festival in Ellijay, GA October 21-22



Hiking Director temporarily turns in Boots for Wet Suit

by Marge Heller

BMTA Members know Ken Cissna best as the guy who organizes group hikes. He leads a lot of those hikes but he often joins in as just a hiker. Ken runs our on-line store and fills merchandise orders in addition to maintaining a section of the BMT and volunteering on GA Maintenance Days. Ken can be seen helping out Publicity as well, by putting up and taking down the event tent a few times during the year and often manning a shift or two. He's a great multi-tasker!

Wow!! So what's with the wet suit?

One of Ken's high school and college swim team buddies suggested they swim, for a fund raising event, the 1.27 miles from Alcatraz to San Francisco Beach. So after nearly nine months of training for the swim, Ken entered the water on September 23 and completed the course in 38:13. Congratulations, Ken!



This photo of Ken was taken immediately after the swim. Please note he is wearing a BMTA hat and probably nearby are his hiking boots!!

Work Trip Reports for September, 2017

by Barry Allen

September's plan was for a work trip on Section 5a, a beautiful section of trail running for 2.3 miles from Wilscot Gap at GA 60 to Ledford Gap on FS 45. As we met for breakfast on Saturday morning, I was somewhat preoccupied with the course of Hurricane Irma and its predicted impact on Georgia early the following week. Irma and its subsequent winds and rain quickly led to several additional work trips in September, focused on tree removal around some of the most popular sites on the BMT.

Saturday, September 9, was devoted to Section 5 – a section of trail lacking a regular maintainer but since adopted by Seth Stanley! Our group of 21 volunteers divided into several teams to handle an assortment of tasks. Gilbert Treadwell and George Owen brought weed-eaters and promptly started on the heavy growth at Ledford Gap. Ben Yaun, Dave Ricker and Sue Ricker cut into the trail below Tipton Mountain and worked with loppers and sling blade toward Ledford Gap. I took Patrick Ward and worked a blowdown on the ascent to the fire tower. Darcy Douglas and Tom Keene took the remaining 12 volunteers -- armed with sling blades and loppers -- over Tipton, working south toward Wilscot. By 1:30 the trail was in tip top shape and we were on our way to Grumpy Old Men to enjoy a nice cold local brew and a Cuban sandwich. *End of work trip number one.*



Neither wind nor rain nor Irma.....

Continued next page

On Monday, September 11, Hurricane Irma hit. It could have been worse. But it was bad enough. After giving the Forest Service a couple of days to clear roads George Owen and Joy Forehand began checking some of the most popular sections of trail. George quickly found a huge blowdown completely blocking the path to the Swinging Bridge. He also located four more blowdowns near Big Stamp Gap. Joy noted a few problems on Section 6 but nothing that had the trail completely blocked as was the case at the Swinging Bridge. On Saturday, September 16, we were able to pull two saw teams together: team 1 – Robert Collins and George Owen removed the blowdowns on Section 1a at Big Stamp Gap and then walked Sections 1b and 1c, identifying many more blowdowns. Team 2 – Mark Yost, Steve Bayliss and Barry Allen removed two blowdowns on Section 2d, clearing the way to the Swinging Bridge. The largest of these trees was a 30” oak laying in the trail for about 70 feet, taking over three hours to remove. *End of work trip number two.*



On Wednesday, September 20, two more saw teams assembled to work Sections 1b and 1c. These teams gathered at the Iron Bridge Café and headed out to the Springer Mountain parking lot on Forest Service 42. Team 1 was made up of George Owen, Ben Yaun and Barry Allen. This team began work at Big Stamp, moving north toward Three Forks. Team 2, made up of Robert Collins, Dave Ricker and Gilbert Treadwell, was shuttled by Ralph Heller to Three Forks. From Three Forks the group worked south toward Big Stamp. The two teams met in the middle about five hours later, thoroughly exhausted, but with over four miles of trail completely clear. *End of work trip number three.*



Next month we have more trail to clear, thanks to Irma. Our goal is to finish removing blowdowns from Section 2, clearing the trail from Three Forks to Bryson.

I hope you can join us for another rewarding day on the trail!

EASY TREK HIKE ON AMADAHY TRAIL

by Sara Bland

It was raining...it was pouring...but the 13 optimistic hikers heading toward Food Lion in Ellijay were not snoring! We all wanted to believe the weather- person when she promised clearing and sunshine by noon at our destination at Carter's Lake. And lo and behold, she happened to be right!

Conditions steadily improved and we enjoyed a dry trek through the chestnut oaks and hickories. This 3.6 mile loop offers small creek crossings, beautiful fern switchbacks and nice lake views unencumbered by human structures. Of course, all of this makes it a popular trail for hikers and bikers.

The perfect ending to a great hike was the picnic by the lake with a congenial group of friends who love the woods. We all look forward to the next time together.



Happy Trails to All, Sara Bland

Hemlocks Treated on BMT in Cherry Log Mountain

by Ralph Heller

September has indeed been a very busy month. In addition to all the extra trail work required due to storm damage, we managed to help treat adelgid infested hemlock trees along part of the BMT in the Sisson Cherry Log Mountain development. It was a combined effort from members of Save Georgia's Hemlocks, the BMTA and Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited (BRMTU).

Supplies for treating the trees were purchased with donations from Joe Sisson, owner of Sisson Company, the BMTA and BRMTU.



Twenty five volunteers treated more than 225 trees, from where the trail crosses the railroad tracks to Indian Rock Pond, which is just past our trail shelter in the development. (News Observer photo/Jason Beck)

Afterwards, attendees were treated to a delicious fried chicken picnic at Indian Rock Pond. BMTA members participating were Ben Yaun, Ken Cissna, Mike Kovitch, Wes Clonts, Ralph Heller, and BMTA guest Richard Joiner. Jason Beck, with the *Blue Ridge News Observer*, and also a BMTA member accompanied us on part of the event. Jason took pictures and wrote an outstanding article which appeared in the September 20 edition of *The News Observer*.

Continued next page

To learn more about how the hemlock woolly adelgids are destroying our hemlocks in the Georgia Mountains and what can be done to save them, check out www.savegeorgiashemlocks.org. This site also contains useful information about how you can treat and save these trees on your own property.



Ralph Heller and Ken Cissna measuring tree diameter in order to calculate dosage for soil injection.
News Observer photo/Jason Beck



Ben Yaun operating a Kioritz injector.
News Observer photo/Jason Beck

TN/NC Monthly Work Trip - September 23, 2017

by Ken Jones

Although fall officially began two days before our work trip the dry summer-like weather continued. Seven volunteers showed up to help the section maintainers, Pam and Kent Mathews, brush out and log out their two Sections 17a and b. These sections are routed along an old railroad bed and use a pre-existing trail, Sycamore Creek Trail in the Tellico Ranger District. We split the group into two crews, with four of us starting at the upper trailhead on FDR 61 with the chainsaw, sling blades and loppers. The rest of the crew started brushing out at the lower trailhead near the Fish Hatchery on Tellico River Road. Working from both ends the crews were able to brush out the entire six miles of trail. The log out crew was able to clear 18 blow downs in the upper 4.5 miles of the trail. There still remain about four to six blow downs in the lower 1.5 miles of the trail for future maintenance. These trees are large and complex to clear, and the sawyer (yours truly) ran out of time and energy to complete the work.

As we were hiking out at the end of the work day, we met a northbound thru-hiker headed for Whigg Meadow. She had started at Springer Mountain and was from England. She came all the way to the United States just to hike our trail.



Work began right at the trailhead on the upper end.



This mess had the whole trail blocked!

We really appreciate BMTA members Tom and Carolyn Sewell coming up from Georgia to help us. Tom is the Long Hike Director for the Mountain High Hiking Club and is a regular maintainer on their Thursday maintenance trips. Thanks go to all of the following volunteers that made this another safe and productive work trip on the BMT: Keith Mertz, Boe Rudder, Ben Yaun, Tom Sewell, Carolyn Sewell, Kent Mathews, Pam Mathews, Ken Jones and Phyllis Jones.

Orange-It looks Good on You!!!

by Bob Ruby

Hunting season is upon us! Get out your orange!

We recommend wearing bright safety colors when in the woods during hunting season.

The season varies, but for firearms it is generally October 21- January 14 in Georgia; September 23- January 10 in Tennessee; October 14 – January 1 in North Carolina. Archery and muzzle loader seasons start earlier. Bright caps can be purchased at Walmart, etc. and pack covers at outfitters. Online retailers also have a large number of selections and sizes. At the annual meeting, BMTA safety shirt are awarded to volunteers with 30+ hours.

Camping, hiking and other recreational uses are allowed year-round in the National Forests, unless otherwise posted at the WMA check station or at a specific recreation site. All WMA visitors are encouraged to wear hunter orange during the hunting seasons. Specific recreation sites may be closed as needed for management purposes by posting at the site.

It is recommended that day hiking begin later in the day due to the early morning hours that hunters prefer. Thru hikers will just have to be aware and alert. For more details contact your local Forest Service Office.

Click on the following web sites for more detailed information:

Georgia: www.georgiawildlife.com/hunting/regulations

Tennessee: <https://www.tn.gov/twra/article/tennessee-hunting-seasons-summary>

North Carolina: <http://ncwildlife.org/Hunting/Season-limits>



October Work Trip Announcement

by Barry Allen

- ◆ **Where:** Sections 2a, b and c
- ◆ **When:** Saturday, October 14, 2017 at 9:00 AM
- ◆ **Meet:** Iron Bridge Café and General Store on Aska Road in Blue Ridge at 8:00 or at Three Forks, FS 58 at 9:00.
- ◆ **Plan for the Day:** Logout Section 2 from the Three Forks to Bryson Gap
- ◆ **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

Hurricane Irma was kind enough to leave a number of trees down on this section of trail. The last count was eight to nine large trees which are causing hikers to leave the trail and walk around obstructions -- plus an abundance of smaller, nuisance stuff. My plan is to assemble three saw teams of at least three to four people each to work this section of trail AUGMENTED by hikers with loppers and hand saws. The entire section is 5.9 miles, but we have access from Three Forks, The Bald and Bryson Gap. I would like to put folks in at all of these points.

If we get good turnout, we should be able to limit the saw teams to about two miles of trail. I'd like to put hikers (with loppers and hand saws) on the trail at Bryson and Three Forks; these folks would hike until they meet in the middle -- probably around No Name Gap. From there, we'll have vehicles at The Bald to shuttle everyone out. I hope to have everyone off the trail by 2:30, but it will depend on the complexity of some of the blowdowns.....

As always, I'd love to see you there. Please call or e-mail if you are able to attend. **We will need shuttle drivers!!!!**



Next Year's Membership Renewal Approaching

by Ralph Heller – Membership Director

Heads up – just a reminder!

Membership is now on a calendar year basis - January 1 through December 31. This means that, technically, after December 31 your previous year's membership has lapsed if not renewed by that time. However, don't despair. We have provided some *wiggle* room. All memberships renewed after November 1 of the current year will be applied to the next year. And there is a grace period to March 1 for late renewals. To avoid the busy Christmas/New Year's holidays, we suggest you renew in November or early December. With all the other happenings and expenses, it is so easy to forget to renew late in the year or early next year. This way you will make sure that your membership is up to date for next year.

Remember, if you pay your membership or make a donation before January 1, it will be tax deductible for this year, not next.

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



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 or 706-636-1741.

The hikes for the next two months are listed below. More will be forthcoming, so check the Activities Calendar of the website and next month's newsletter for updates.

October

October 13th (Friday) River Loop at Chestnut Mountain by the Whitewater Center
7.5 miles, moderate
Contact hike leader Evelin Yarns at eyarns AT sprynet.com

October 19th (Thursday) Rainbow Falls (Scenic Spur Trail) in the Cherokee National Forest.
1.7 (total 3.4) miles, moderate; gets you to the first two falls and a little trail takes you up to a third fall. There are two creek crossings.
Contact hike leader Clare Sullivan at clare7982 AT gmail.com or 404-849-0872

October 30th (Monday) 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

November

November 3, 4, 5th (Friday, Saturday, Sunday) Annual meeting—with LOTS of hikes in or near Vogel State Park. These hikes have their own story in the Newsletter on page three.

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

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

October Newsletter deadline is October 25, 2017. Thank you!