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BMTA Headquarters

Benton MacKaye Trail Association



VOLUME 35, ISSUE 12

DECEMBER 2018

President's Column

Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat. (Sun Tzu, the Art of War)

For the last several years my role in the organization has been a tactical role: maintain the trail. Whether the need was water diversions, tread-way improvement, tree removal, or step and bridge rehab -- the idea was to put together a plan to get the job done. In our efforts to keep the trail open and enjoyable for hikers, tactics always focused on maintenance. ***But what is our strategy to keep the BMTA relevant and vibrant and growing so that members are always here to fulfil our mission?***

When members of the BMTA asked me to serve a term as president they were asking me to serve in a more strategic role -- a role that starts with the mission of the organization and includes a vision of where we want to go and how we may get there -- ***a vision that may help to inspire the next generation of caretakers. Enjoyment in the task and fulfilment in the results are critical or many people just won't continue to volunteer.***

The Benton MacKaye Trail Association was established to 'construct, maintain and protect the BMT.' In addition to this core mission we were organized to 'promote hiking, camping and a wilderness experience in the Southern Appalachians while instilling an ethic of conservation in our membership and in the public.' ***Our core mission will not change: we are here to construct, maintain and protect the trail.*** But an organization should have goals that challenge and promote improvement and vitality within the group.

I'll start the ball rolling with a vision -- a vision in my words, but hopefully something I grasped from listening to our members through the years.

I see the BMT as the preeminent mid-distance hiking trail in the nation. My wish is that every person hiking our trail comes to the following conclusion: this hike is a dream come true -- challenging, generally remote, but a well maintained trail. Enjoyable and memorable. I want our trail to push people to want to give back. We need to inspire that subconscious thought that many of us reached at some point in our lives -- a desire to preserve and protect certain elements that have impacted our lives. As importantly we can influence other lives by sharing a sound conservation ethic which includes hard work with a reward that is mostly personal and not public.

We can achieve this vision for the BMT through 1) Maintenance 2) Growth 3) Corridor protection and enhancement.

Continued next page

Today, maintenance is the most fundamental piece of our mission. Those of us who see hiker comments know we can improve the experience of the BMT. Comments on problems with certain sections of the trail are made every year. There are areas that are difficult to work and frequently become overgrown with brambles. Blow-downs present a constant nuisance. *The trail is always growing and changing; the work will be there year after year. Criticisms about trail conditions should only be viewed as an opportunity to plan and improve.*

Maintenance is a critical piece of the pie. But so is growth. As our organization grows maintenance can be spread over more and more volunteers. Section maintainers should not be asked to care for five or six or 10 miles of trail. That is simply too much. A day of maintenance with 20 volunteers is much easier than a day with eight or 12 people trying to cover four miles of trail. Maintenance is not always about water diversions or tree removal. It can also be about hiking the trail and letting maintenance directors know when a section is messy. It can be about driving a shuttle so workers are dropped at one end of a section and work back to their cars. It can be about planning for ice cold drinks and snacks at the end of a hot day on the trail.

Maintenance and growth are important, as is the corridor and its protection. We still have opportunities to improve the path by moving from road to trail. We have areas that are threatened by routes through private lands. And we have areas where the trail can be improved with relatively short re-routes through public lands. **However, the trail corridor should include more than the actual footpath.** I enjoy seeing new trails and new ridgelines; new springs and new creeks; new valleys and even new trees. Through a dedication to growth and maintenance, the BMT can take responsibility for additional trails that adjoin and intersect our path. These complimentary trails to the BMT can become part of our corridor. But we cannot reach this step in corridor protection until we fully meet our obligations on the existing trail.

The question is, DO WE SHARE A COMMON VISION? That is, do we wish to see the Benton MacKaye Trail as the best trail it can be, THE preeminent mid-distance trail in the nation? What should be the strategy of the BMTA to keep our small group growing and vibrant and focused on a mission and a vision? Are maintenance, growth and corridor protection the right tactics to consider, or are we missing something? What maintenance goals need to be set? What about growth and corridor protection goals?

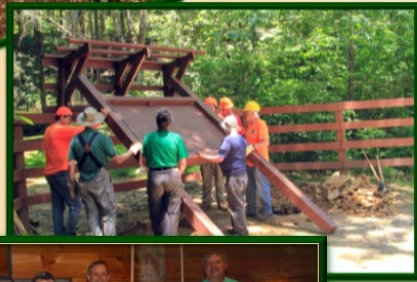
Am I on the right path and if so, what goals should we be tracking? I have my own thoughts, but I would rather hear yours. I plan to continue this conversation over the coming months as we talk about the various committees working on maintenance plans, publicity, the website, social media, the corridor, and other issues. I encourage all to share thoughts with me at [bmtabarry AT gmail.com](mailto:bmtabarry@gmail.com).



Ready to take on the challenges!



Thank you to our 2018 Benton MacKaye Volunteers!



"...leaving a footpath for generations to follow."

GIVE A BMTA MEMBERSHIP!

by Darcy Douglas

It's that time of year – **RENEWAL TIME!!!**

Just click here to join or renew <http://bmta.org>.

If you joined or renewed recently and my email to you said you were good through 2019, you do NOT need to renew. Otherwise, please feel free to send in your dues. We are on a calendar year schedule but do have a little leeway if you forget with all the holiday things coming up. Looking forward to all these renewals for 2019 – your membership dollars really add to the organization, especially our trail building and maintaining activities.

If you join at the Corporate level, your company name will appear in the newsletter at least three times throughout the year. If you join as a Life Member, you never have to give dues a thought again! If you are short on cash, find a friend to give you a gift membership, or give one to your loved one or friend. **Perhaps you have that hard to buy for person for whom a gift membership would be just the thing to get them into the woods and on the trail! It just might be the best Christmas present ever!** Remember we are a 501c3 organization, too! We hope you'll take care of this before the end of 2018 and stay on as a member of the Best Little Ole' Trail in the southeast USA!!!!

Our **CORPORATE MEMBERS** are listed here.... please use their services and mention you are a member of the BMTA!! Thanks to each of these eight for their contribution to the BMTA.

1. **Ens and Outs – Unitarian Universalist Church – Atlanta, Georgia**
2. **Historic Tapoco Lodge – Robbinsville, North Carolina – <https://tapoco.com>**
3. **Korean Alpine Club – Duluth, Georgia (ask me for contact information)**
4. **Lowery and Associates Surveying Company, LLC – Cartersville, Georgia - <https://lowerylandsurveys.com>**
5. **North Georgia Mountain Outfitters – Ellijay, Georgia**
6. **Save Georgia's Hemlocks – Dahlonega, Georgia – <https://www.savegeorgiashemlocks.org>**
7. **Jeff and Lori Patterson – Copperhill, Tennessee – Airbnb for hikers and runs shuttles for hikers – faithandhopetogetherATgmail.com – (ask me for phone number)**
8. **Starr Mountain Outfitters – Etowah, Tennessee – <https://www.starmountainoutfitters.com>**

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. **THANK YOU!!!**

COW CAMP/BALD RIVER TRAILS

By Clayton Webster

On Friday, November 2, Brenda and Rick Harris, Ed Sullivan, Debbie Tuten and Clayton Webster headed to hike the Cow Camp and Bald River Trails. The Cow Camp Trail has a very unusual start. There is a guardrail at the end of the bridge that you have to climb over before heading up a very steep ridge to a wooden stairway to begin your hike.

The Cow Camp Trail goes steeply up the mountain alongside a small stream. Later on you have to pretty much walk in the creek for awhile. Eventually we got above the stream, but could never see the source. We came to an enormous chestnut oak that had been sawed up to clear the trail. This is in the wilderness area where chainsaws are not allowed. Rick Harris said he was on a seven man crew that worked all day with crosscut saws to open the trail. One of the workers counted the rings on the tree and determined it had been a 230 year old tree.



When we reached the ridge top, we were at Henderson Top. Rick Harris said that in the old days this relatively flat area was cleared out so cattle could graze there. That is where the Cow Camp name came from.

From here it was a slippery downhill hike to connect to the Bald River Trail. All the wet leaves made it even more treacherous. Recent rains, which still continued off and on for us, had made the river truly spectacular. Bald River Falls is the signature of the Bald River, but for the next few miles, we would see waterfall after waterfall that could be a destination all by itself. The entire river seemed to be one cascading waterfall after another. Add in the thick rhododendron cover on each side of the river and the peak fall colors up above and it was like walking in a wonderland.



Much of the trail we were on was the bed of a narrow gauge railroad from the old logging days. There is a huge rocky curve in the river with 100' tall cliffs. Rick Harris said that in the old days the railroad tracks were actually in the river going around the curve as there was no way to get over the cliff.

We saw a number of bear hunters during the day. I was here about three weeks ago. At the Green Cove Store they told me that 11 bears had been taken already that week. Rick Harris said that they usually harvest around 80 bears annually in this general area but the population is still very strong.



All smiles!

COKER CREEK FALLS

by Clayton Webster

On November 3, 2018, 11 members of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association, as part of the Annual Meeting at the Coker Creek Visitors Center, did a six mile shuttle hike to beautiful Coker Creek Falls. The fall colors had finally reached their peak and the streams were roaring after all the recent rainfall.

Despite several days of rain, the trail was in pretty good shape except for a number of serious blow downs that we had to crawl under or over.

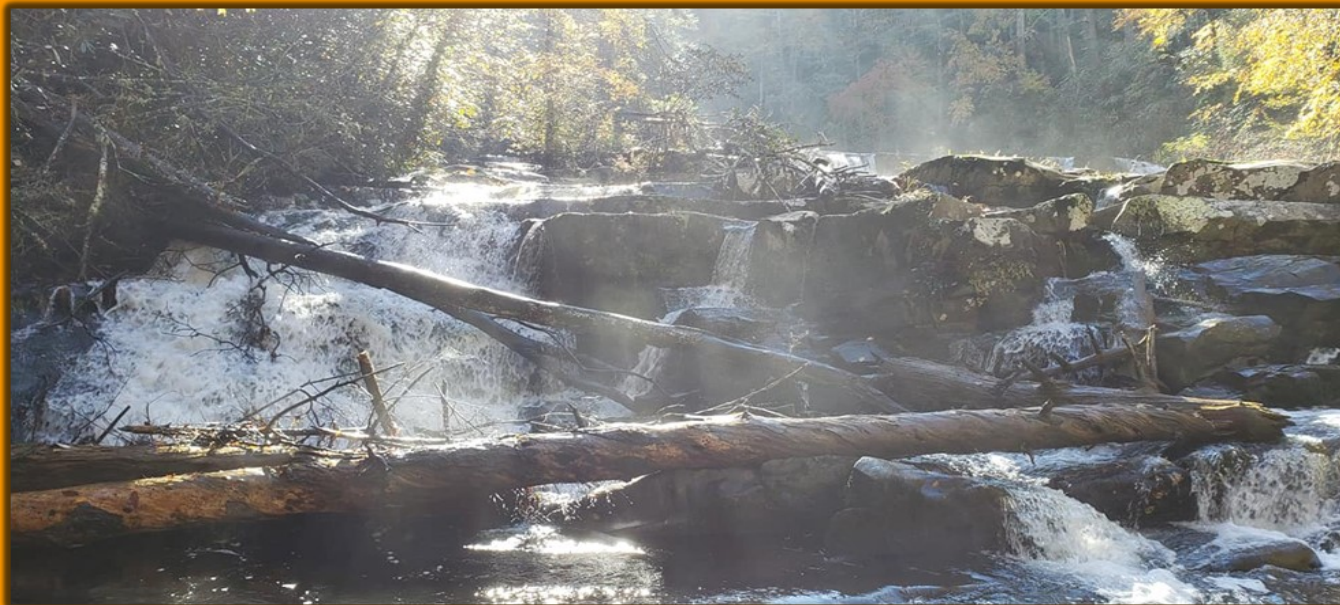


Coker Creek Falls is actually a series of falls. Below are the middle falls on Coker Creek. The water was really roaring after the recent rains.



Continued next page

Here are the lower falls on Coker Creek. This was my favorite with the sun shining on the mist created by the roaring water. Imagine what the water level had been to float those big logs over the falls!



Once we passed the lower falls, the trail began to climb higher up the mountain. We still had a frequent view of the stream, but were not right beside it as before. We were headed down to the intersection of the Coker Creek Trail and the Benton MacKaye Trail where we were to eat our lunch. When we reached the trail intersection there was a nice campsite. Some people ate lunch on logs while others ate on the very nice bridge over Coker Creek. The bridge has a very unusual design. We think it was built to withstand what looked like numerous floods through the area. One person said it looked like it was built out of Lincoln Logs.

After lunch we had a pretty steep uphill climb on the Benton MacKaye Trail. It was great to walk on a nicely maintained trail pretty much clear of blowdowns or other obstacles. The trail finally leveled out a little bit before we reached Hwy 68 where our shuttle vehicles were parked. Then it was back to the Coker Creek Visitors Center to clean up and get ready for another great meal in the dining hall!



Rick Harris, Debbie Tuten, Clayton Webster, Phil Guhl, Ellie Doughty, Cindy Spangler, Barry Allen, Tom Sewell, Keith Mertz, and Butch Watson. Photo: Debbie Moore.

BMTA at Boy Scouts' Hornaday Midway Event

by Bob Cowdrick

The Hornaday Award is given to Scouts who earn merit badges and participate in conservation projects. The midway event was to expose the Scouts to conservation project opportunities that are available and to give them ideas of organizations that could use their assistance. The BMTA was one of 10 organizations participating and we had a great turnout with a lot of interest from the Scouts. Representing the BMTA were Bob Ruby and Bob Cowdrick.

We received 12 email addresses from interested Scout leaders with whom we will stay in touch over the next year to make sure they are aware of our monthly trail maintenance events.

We handed out about 50 trail cards to the Scouts that stopped at our booth. Most were not aware of the BMT so we gave them a quick education about the trail to those who were interested.

The Scouts with the trail cards may be contacting us through the website so whoever gets these inquiries be aware that some may be coming from Scouts looking for conservation hours.

They plan to repeat this event in November 2019 at Camp Woodruff near Blairsville, GA, so we may be asked to attend next year.



Thank you!

by Darcy Douglas

Thank you!!!

Having my name called to receive an award at the Annual Meeting this year was quite a surprise, especially as I was so involved in the scheduling of who got what when, so I already knew such a thing wouldn't happen. It did take a few moments to process it, and I must say I am still not through with that processing. The Distinguished Service Award for the Benton MacKaye Trail is one rarely given, and only then with the input of a number of people. I feel truly honored and am grateful to those who contributed. I have seen many changes over the years with this trail, but one thing that has always been there is the kindness, intelligence, creativity and persistence of a core group of people. Those in the core might change, but that core is what makes the trail survive. It is very special to be acknowledged as part of that core with this award which WILL hang on the wall near my computer. Thank you again, so much!!!!

TN/NC Work Trip - Saturday Nov 17 - Bob Bald Area

by Rick Harris

Seventeen trail volunteers came together for the fairly strenuous work trip on the TN/NC state line to clear the trail of brush from Beech Gap on the Cherohala Skyway across Bob Bald, and up to the intersection with the Haoe Lead Trail. This is a section which has received many comments about a lot of thick briers, especially from Bob Bald to the Haoe Lead Trail.

We met at the Cherohala Skyway Visitor Center to carpool up to the state line on the Skyway followed by two miles down the old FS road to Cold Springs Gap. This road is full of deep mud holes and some big rocks, requiring high clearance 4WD vehicles. We had to cut out with a chainsaw a big hanging tree top, which was rather dangerous, but Barry Allen did a great job of getting it cleared off the road. Once we reached Cold Springs Gap, Rick Harris conducted the safety talk and split the 17 into four crews of four or five volunteers each. Two crews hoofed it up to the top of the bald with four brush cutters and many loppers. Barry Allen's crew went to the Haoe Lead Trail intersection and worked south toward the bald and John Zardis' crew worked north from the bald toward Barry. They cleared this entire section of all the thick briers. Rick Harris' and Phil Guhl's crews worked up from Cold Springs Gap to the fir trees on the north end of the bald, also with four brush cutters and loppers. We all convened on the bald on this beautiful, crystal clear, fall day with expansive views of the surrounding mountains. The "Bob" is over a mile above sea level.

We then returned to Cold Springs Gap for cookies, pretzels, beer, hot spiced tea and hot chocolate, thanks to Brenda Harris, then drove back out the FS road to the Skyway. Some of us ate at El Jacal's in Tellico and others returned to Georgia to eat at restaurants in Blue Ridge or elsewhere. It was a great trip with a lot of work being accomplished. In total 157.25 hours of work was accomplished and including the drive time, the total was 200.25 hours. This is a hefty sum toward the 2019 maintainer t-shirts.

Trail crew volunteers included Rick Harris, Brenda Harris, Phil Guhl, Debra Guhl, John Zardis, Barry Allen, Larry Jarkorsky, Keith Mertz, Butch Watson, Bob Brown, David Blount, Jack Weber, Sue Ricker, Dave Ricker, Bob Nelson, Rob Herman and Rick Parks.

Please come to next month's work trip up in TN/NC as well.



GEORGIA DECEMBER WORK TRIP

Sections 3c and 4a

by Phil Guhl

- **Where:** Sections 3c and 4a
- **When:** Saturday, December 8, 2018
- **Meet:** 8:00 at the Village Restaurant (4131 East 1st Street, Blue Ridge, GA 30513) or 9:00 at Skeenah Gap trailhead on Skeenah Gap Road.
- **Plan for the Day:** 1) Lopping & tree removal, 2) Water diversions 3) De-berming
- **What to bring:** Minimum of two liters of water, long pants, boots, gloves, and a snack.
- **Contact:** Phil Guhl at pguh1 AT guhlspace.com or (770) 548-5590 (Please RSVP so we can plan on the number of tools, helmets, and FOOD!)

Ah! Another second Saturday of the month is upon us! In December, we will be working between Rhodes Mountain and Payne Gap.

Given we have enough volunteers, my plan for the day is to have three teams:

Team One will be a) lopping Mountain Laurels (to maintain the 4' corridor), b) cleaning and installing marked water diversions, c) de-berming the downhill side of the trail, and d) tree removal from Payne Gap to Skeenah Gap. Day ends when meeting Team Two.

Team Two will be a) cleaning and installing marked water diversions and b) de-berming the downhill side of the trail from Skeenah Gap towards Payne Gap. Day ends when meeting Team One.

Team Three will be cleaning water diversions from Skeenah Gap to Rhodes Mountain (at Duncan Ridge Trail fork).

Thrivent Action Team will be providing the food and beverages after we get off the trail to reimburse those lost calories! Thank you Patrick Ward.

I am working on a few options for parking and will provide the full commuting plan in the next week. Plan is to get off the trail by 2:30 and rendezvous for snacks, drinks and a little social time.

If you are new to trail maintenance and are not sure what to expect, please give me a call and we can discuss it. The goal is to be safe, productive, and to have fun doing something worthwhile!

In 2019, we will once again be doing the Tour of Georgia maintenance plan. Unless an urgent need arises, we will be working a section that corresponds to the month's number, i.e., January = Section 1, February = Section 2, March = Section 3, etc. It should be fun and we will touch all of the Georgia sections of the trail, so mark the second Saturday of every month on your calendar!

TN/NC BMTA Work Trip Saturday, December 15 McFarland Road to Lost Creek Campground Section 12d

by Rick Harris

We had a great work trip on top of Bob Bald on November 17 with 17 workers clearing the entire stretch from Beech Gap to the intersection of the BMT with the Haeo Lead Trail. This section had received many comments about thick briars, especially north of Bob Bald. Now for a repeat performance on another section of the BMT which has received a lot of comments about lots of trees down and brush/briars. This is Section 12d and it is 3.9 miles long, but a fair amount is old gated Forest Service road which generally does not need much maintenance.

We will meet at Hall's Grocery at the corner of TN-30 and Kimsey Highway (<https://goo.gl/maps/STwDZKrXeIS2>) at 9 AM, to give you GA folks enough time to get up here. We will have sign-ins and our safety talk, then split up into two crews. One crew will go to the McFarland Road end and work north with chain saws, brush cutters, loppers and hand saws and the other crew will go to the Lost Creek end and work south with similar tools. When we meet, the day will be over and each crew will return to their vehicles.

After we are finished, we could all convene at Flip Flop Burgers for some burgers, fries and beer.

Please let Rick Harris (HarrisRi AT aol.com) or Phil Guhl (pguhl AT guhlspace.com) know if you plan to attend so we can make proper arrangements for tools, work crews, etc.

New Rails at Fall Branch Falls

by the Publicity Committee



As many of us noted during our recent Grand Opening of the Fall Branch Falls Reroute the platform at the base of the falls had been in need of repair.

The BMTA promised to take this project on and here Barry Allen and Phil Guhl show off the handiwork.

Well done!!

Thank you!

Georgia November Work Report

by Phil Guhl with photos courtesy of Mike Kovitch

I want to thank everyone for your support and guidance as I embark on this journey in my new role!

My first maintenance trip in this new role is now under my belt. I hope everyone had as much fun as I did! I now better understand why Barry always walked around with a smile. It is a wonderful experience working with quality folks. It made my job easier than I could have imagined.

The November work trip in Georgia took place on the second Saturday, November 10th, but the trip started several days earlier with the help of a couple of key individuals: Ben Yaun and Barry Allen. On Halloween, October 31st, Ben Yaun assisted me in scouting Sections 5A and 5B. He, likewise, made an excellent model for the photographs of the issues we encountered and documented.

On November 7th, I worked in the shadow and under the guidance of Barry, “The Machine,” Allen as we traveled to the Blairsville Forest Service Work Center to dig through their “bone yard” for cross ties for planned work on the steps. We loaded nine cross ties into back of Barry’s Black Beast and headed for Brawley Mountain.

As we entered the gate at Wilscot Gap...I swung the gate back to close it. It would have been a perfect closure had Barry’s truck been a little farther up the road, but...it wasn’t and Barry lost his right taillight. Note to self: check for clearance rather than making an assumption. We then headed up to Ledford Gap and dropped off five crossties and then up to the fire tower to drop off the remaining four.



Ben Yaun in his new career as a “BMTA model”.

Thank you for the huge turn out! We had 27 willing souls come out and three of those came from Tennessee! We started the day just below freezing; however, it warmed up quickly with the work and the hiking. Only to be topped off with hot dogs, homemade chili, homemade cole slaw and beverages at the conclusion of it all.



At the amphitheater, we reviewed the work to be done, discussed the Job Hazard Analysis (JHA), and had a safety briefing. Then the teams were assigned.

The work that was done was on par with the excellent quality the Benton MacKaye Trail work trips are known for.

I will work backwards on the teams in the summary.

Team Three. Gilbert Treadwell (leader), John Zardis and Darcy Douglas. These three folks logged out the entire section from the Brawley fire tower to Wilscot Gap. Additionally, they made any repairs caused by the blowdowns to the tread as needed. This section should be good till next spring or longer due to your efforts.

Team Two. Barry Allen (leader), Mark Yost, Ben Yaun, Joe Page, Brian Trinkle and Mike Kovitch. Hauling cross ties, digging, clearing roots, removing rocks, and driving rebar. Those steps look outstanding and I would expect them to last for 10 years or more with minor maintenance. This was some challenging physical work, but they stepped up and knocked it out of the park!

Team One. We had several different sub-teams on Team One; however, from one end to the other the trail is now clear. This was the primary objective on this trip as we have received several complaints from hikers about overgrowth. You came, you saw, you conquered! Great work and thank you for being patient with me in assigning work locations. We started a little jammed up, but got spread out nicely to get the entire section cleared. From Brawley fire tower to Ledford Gap (plus some): Tom Keene and Dave Ricker. From Ledford Gap toward Tipton Mountain: Steve Bayliss, Richard and Brenda Harris. From Tipton Mountain toward Ledford Gap: Mike Pilvinsky, Patrick Ward, Cindy Ward and Jack Ward. Working cleanup between Ledford Gap and Tipton Mountain: Doug Kleiber and Debbie Arnold. From Tipton Mountain to Wilscot Gap: Ken Cissna, David Lankford, Janice Lankford and Frank Forehand.

Special team: Assisted with brushing from Ledford Gap to the flagged egress point and then setting up an outstanding meal: Debra Guhl and Sue Ricker.





I learned quite a bit in my first time out in this new role, such as don't let people work alone, don't remove flagging tape until all are accounted for, get a group picture, etc. I will be working to better organize and execute plans going forward. I want you to be productive, BUT more importantly, I want you to have fun and do it safely!

Mark your calendars...the second Saturday of every month is the Georgia Work Trip. On Saturday, December 8th we will be heading out to Skeenah Gap to work from Skeenah Gap to Payne Gap (Section 4a) and to Rhodes Mountain (Section 3c).

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 couple of months are listed below. Definitely into Fall now with Winter approaching—cooler weather and great long-distance views! More hikes will be forthcoming, so check the Activities Calendar of the website and next month’s newsletter for updates. Enjoy.

November

November 30 (Friday) BMT in the Cohuttas #1: Bushy Head Gap to Hudson Gap and return. 5.2 miles, moderate, 500’ elevation change each way. Beautiful ridge hike.

Contact Hike Leader Tom Sewell at [SewellTom AT yahoo.com](mailto:SewellTom@yahoo.com) or text to (706) 669-6406.

December

December 7 (Friday) Stanley Gap Trail from Deep Gap off Aska Road to intersection with BMT and back. About 5 miles, moderate.

Contact hike leader Evelin Yarns at [eyarns AT sprynet.com](mailto:eyarns@sprynet.com).

December 17 (Monday) BMT in the Cohuttas #2: Hudson Gap to Fowler Mt. and return. 7.6 miles, moderate, about 700’ elevation change each way. Beautiful ridge hike.

Contact Hike Leader Tom Sewell at [SewellTom AT yahoo.com](mailto:SewellTom@yahoo.com) or text to (706) 669-6406.

January

January 4 (Friday) BMT from Hwy 515 to Weaver Creek and return. Easy 5 mile walk along mostly dirt roads.

Contact Hike Leader Tom Sewell at [SewellTom AT yahoo.com](mailto:SewellTom@yahoo.com) or text to (706) 669-6406.

January 14 (Monday) Big Frog Trail to Rough Creek Trail to BMT to Thunder Rock Campground. 8.1 miles, moderate. Most of the elevation change is in last few miles, downhill to the campground.

Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [kcissna AT usf.edu](mailto:kcissna@usf.edu) or (813) 310-6084.

January 22 (Tuesday) Trails of Boling Park in Canton.

Join us for 5-7 miles of easy to moderate hiking to celebrate Hike Leader Howard Baggett's 80th birthday.

Contact Howard Baggett at Howardeb AT windstream.net.

January 25 (Friday) BMT Section 9, Dyer Gap to Watson Gap, with a side trip to Shadow Falls.

Easy hike of 4½ miles with lunch along South Jack's River.

Contact hike leader Larry Dumas at ledumas AT hotmail.com.

February

February 14 (Thursday) Wagon Train Trail – Brasstown Bald. Co-sponsored with Georgia Forest Watch 5 miles, easy-moderate. Two miles of gentle downhill to the overlook and back, plus up to the tower if we're feeling like that. Besides the views, we'll be hoping for the spectacular ice formations on the trailside cliffs (if temperatures cooperate). Alternate date if bad weather, February 19 (Tuesday).

Contact hike leaders Sue Harmon of GFW at suepharmon AT gmail.com or (770) 540-3672 or Ken Cissna of BMTA at kcissna AT usf.edu or (706) 636-1741.

February 27-28 (Wednesday-Thursday) Join BMTA on overnight trip to the **Len Foote Hike Inn**. Details are below.

Contact hike leader Ken Cissna at kcissna AT usf.edu or (813) 310-6084.



Again this year, BMTA will be able to enjoy a *half price* winter outing to the beautiful Len Foote Hike Inn, Georgia's extraordinary backcountry lodge.

This year, though, it is essential that anyone interested in going reserve their room quickly lest you be closed out.

We'll be arriving on February 27th, departing on the 28th. The hike is 5.1 miles, moderate difficulty. Cost is about \$100 per person for a two-person room (including tax)—about 70 for a single.

The hot showers are wonderful, the rooms are heated, and the dinner after arrival and breakfast the next morning are superb!

Don't miss out! Contact hike leader Ken Cissna at kcissna AT usf.edu or (813) 310-6084.

The deadline for the January Newsletter is Wednesday January 2.

Happy Holidays and good hiking to you!!