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Secretary:	Joy Forehand
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TN/NC M/C:	Vacant
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BMTA Headquarters



President's Column

Much Ado at Fall Branch Falls

TN-NC Maintenance Catch-up

NomComm '19 at Work

FBF: In the Fullness of Time...

The approach trail to the Fall Branch Falls (FBF) near Blue Ridge (Section 6b) may be the most heavily used section of our trail. On sunny weekends hundreds of people, of all ages and body types visit the falls. Over the years the approach trail has eroded badly, with much of the sediment running right into the nearby creek. Work on the reroute to move the trail away from the stream began three or four years ago. (Honestly, I've forgotten.) Whenever it began, the work was officially completed on June 6, 2018, by a combined BMTA and Forest Service crew, led on our side by **Barry Allen**. The new trail had been open for several weeks, but conditions did not fit closing the old one. On June 6 the rest of the deed was done: A board fence went up, and trees came down to block the old trail. A new information kiosk also went up, a product of much back-office work by **Darcy Douglas** as well as some high-level lumber scavenging and carpentry by **Larry Dumas**. Major thanks also to **Towdy Tipton** in the Blue Ridge District Office who helped sort out both the specs and the materials.



Completing the FBF reroute: Larry Dumas (blue shirt) prepares the new trailhead kiosk for installation as (L-R) Ben Yaun, Debra Guhl, Dave Ricker, and Frank Forehand look on. (Photo by Mike Kovitch)



Fall Branch Falls on BMT Section 6b.
Photo from exploregeorgia.org

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And that's not all! While leading the effort on June 6, Barry had an idea: Why not put up the BMTA festival tent at the FBF trailhead on some of those busy weekends and promote the Association with the numerous visitors to the falls. **Jeff DePaola** and **Joy Forehand** from the BMTA Publicity Team jumped on the idea and are currently working toward an FBF trailhead tent in the near future.

TN-NC Maintenance Update

As I write this column, the **Southeast Conservation Corps (SECC)** summer crew is hard at work on the hundred-plus blowdowns on the Nantahala National Forest sections of the BMT between the Hangover Lead and Yellow Hammer Gap. **Dick Evans** is working closely with **Heath Emmons** of the Nantahala's Cheoah and Tusquitee District Office to support the crew.

Readers will recall that the plan was for a second crew from the **Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS)** to tackle the Cherokee NF's so-called **Heart of Darkness** between Sandy Gap and Sled Runner Gap. SAWS, however, has had to delay that effort, perhaps for some time because of a recent buyout of a key SAWS corporate supporter. This news came just as several thru-hikers reported that the Heart of Darkness portion of the BMT was virtually impassible with vegetation growth.

Into the breach have stepped **Barry Allen** and the **Georgia Maintenance Team** working in concert with the **Ocoee Ten** led during July and August by **Clare and Ed Sullivan**. The joint aim is to put all hands on deck during July and August to bring light to the Heart of Darkness!

It will be a big job. Can you help? See Barry's call to arms (or at least his call to swing blades and weed eaters!) on page 3.

NomComm '19 Hard at Work

Amidst all the work above in the "backwoods," the BMTA "back-office" churns along! The Nominations Committee for 2019 Officers recently held its first meeting via conference call. The committee, chaired by **Ken Cissna**, is currently communicating with potential nominees to confirm their willingness to serve. NomComm '19 members, besides **Ken**, are **Phil and Debra Guhl, Joy Forehand, George Owen and Dick Evans**, with the current association president an ex officio non-voting member. If you are interested in serving on the board, or on one of the teams (Maintenance, Publicity, Hiking, etc.) assisting board members' work, contact any member of the committee or use the [Contact Us](#) link on the BMTA homepage.

Per the association's bylaws the committee will announce its slate of nominees to the Board of Directors at the August 18 meeting and to the general membership in the September newsletter.



"Leaving a footpath for generations to follow"

July Work Trips: The Horror! The Horror! Georgia/Tennessee/North Carolina Combined Work Trips

By Barry Allen

"He cried in a whisper at some image, at some vision -- he cried out twice, a cry that was no more than a breath: The Horror! The Horror!"

For those who are old enough to have read Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" when high school English Lit forced the issue, you may remember that quote. Something about "The Horror! "The Horror! always painted a stark image in my mind. Watching Marlon Brando in 'Apocalypse Now' reinforced the image.

Our own "Heart of Darkness" which includes much of Section 16 is a stretch of trail extending seven miles from Sandy Gap in Tennessee to the next closest access point at Beaverdam Bald -- plus an additional three miles through a Wilderness Study area. While Beaverdam Bald is not on the BMT, we use a half mile access trail from Beaverdam to reach the BMT for work purposes. I have worked this section on two occasions, and whatever Joseph Conrad meant by "the Horror" can certainly be applied to our own "Heart of Darkness." In my mind, I remember this section as one of the toughest work days I ever put myself through.

In July, I plan to use both the **Georgia work date on JULY 14, and the Tennessee work date on JULY 28 to work seven miles of this section, including the access from Beaverdam Bald.** Hikers have recently reported this section as almost unhikeable due to the heavy growth of weeds, briars and brambles. Because of its remoteness, this section has not been blazed in years, so blazes are impossible to find in many places. The overgrown nature of the trail combined with the lack of blazes can make this a scary section to hike. We will try to fix both problems with two tough, hard work sessions in July.

On July 14, I plan to drive to Tennessee, taking my Georgia gang onto the trail from Beaverdam Bald on the standard second Saturday. We'll work until 2:00 or 2:30 and exit the trail. On July 28, Ed and Clare Sullivan are leading the Tennessee work day, with me tagging along. We'll pick up where we left off on July 14 and continue the work in the Heart of Darkness. **OUR HOPE IS TO FINISH THE SEVEN MILES IN TWO TRIPS, BUT IF WE NEED TO RETURN IN AUGUST WITH THE GEORGIA GROUP, THEN WE WILL.**

More details on the meeting place and times will follow, but right now, we need to get word out so we have an idea of volunteer numbers. (Likely meeting places will be the Home Depot in Blue Ridge at 7:15 or Tellico Trout Hatchery/Pheasant Field Picnic Area on Tellico River Road in Tennessee at 9:00.) We need shuttle drivers for those who would like to help, but honestly don't need to be on the trail for five hours in the July heat.

Tools for the day will be chain saw, brush cutters, loppers, fire rakes, sling blades and paint brushes. Brush cutters will be the primary tool with other tools offering support from behind. We should have six brush cutters running full time. (I intend to run each of these cutters with a two-man team -- if we can come up with 12 volunteers who will make sure these cutters are kept going NON-STOP for 5 hours -- always pushing forward).

The main thing we need now is a count of people interested in attending. This will help both the Sullivan's and myself as we try to figure logistics for both days. **Please let us both know if you can attend and on which dates..... (Contact Barry at bmtabarry AT gmail.com or 770-294-7384.)**

PS: Don't let my comment on the difficulty dissuade you from attending; there will be plenty to do for all ability levels.

Nov. 2-4 Annual Meeting Update: Housing Info Please Hurry!!

by George Owen, Chair, 2018 BMTA Annual Meeting Committee

When you read this, it's now four months only or less until the BMTA Annual Meeting at Coker Creek Campground. Autumn is a favorite weekend trip time in this area - so please hurry now and get your cabin or bunkhouse bed!! Of the four locations below, only the last, cabins at Tellico Plains, is more than a mile from our campground meeting place. Here below, slightly updated, is the latest data published in the last newsletter.

MOUNTAIN CREEK HIDEAWAY & GRILLE

Located just 6/10ths of a mile south of Coker Creek Campground, this location has several cabins with either one or two bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom. Cabin 10 has no kitchen or bathroom, but uses the nearby shower house. It's the only place in this part of the county licensed to sell beer and has a variety of short order foods, including pizza. See last month's newsletter for more details. Reservations: Contact Nadia Domrowski for info, reservations at 352-563-9824.

TWO ROOMS LEFT AT COCOBELL LODGE

Admittedly this is the "fanciest" housing we have for the annual meeting, just about a half-mile from the campground, and really, really super nice. To acquire one of these very lovely rooms with shared baths in some cases and kitchen privileges, contact George Owen on how to send your initial payment and other details. This is a hilltop, three-floor facility with very friendly owners. BMTAers have already signed up for other bedrooms.

BUNKHOUSE SPACE REMAINS AT CCC

It's basic, bunk beds, and sharing a nearby shower house only yards away, but the eight bunkhouses in the heart of Coker Creek Campground (CCC) still have plenty of space. Coker Creek has offered to make these available just about any way a "sub-group" would want them - couples together for some, or all men or all women for others. (The two genders just please go in opposite ends of the shower house when bathing or duty calls!) Contact CCC at 423-261-2310 for reservations.

...AND...THOSE CABINS AT TELLICO PLAINS

It may be significantly further from the campground - 10-12 miles - but these are mighty nice cabins, rather new, very reasonable. There are quite a few of these available right now. Various size cabins at low cost await your call - about twenty minutes from our three-day meeting location at Coker Creek. To rent one of these, contact Mountain View Cabin Rentals - www.tellicologcabins.com - 423-519-2000. These are all very clean, \$39 plus tax nightly and up.



Mushroom Hike

by Howard Baggett & Ken Cissna



Four mushroom seekers (Bob Brown, Ken Cissna, Lydia Kieft and Howard Baggett), inspired by knowledgeable mushroom hunter Lydia Kieft, enjoyed a 5.5 mile hike consisting of the Green Loop, hiking along the Etowah river on the White Trail to a highly unusual pedestrian bridge, and back out via the Orange and Purple Trails.

In the first 15 mins (on the Green Trail), we counted seven different species of mushrooms plus saw a baby red-eared slider turtle.

In total, we spotted between 20 and 30 different varieties of mushrooms including a handful that were edible (but we left them where they were--this hike was for identifying, not harvesting mushrooms).

We also saw two adult box turtles, one of which was laying her eggs in the trail; an American toad, deer prints, and clear evidence of wild boar rooting for grub.

Where in the World is this BMTA Maintainer?



Dry Gap to Thunder Rock Campground: The Case of the Puzzling Ticks

By Tom Sewell

On the Tuesday, June 4 hike five BMTA members were joined by four wonderful visitors from Gulf Shores, Alabama. This matchup created a serious scientific puzzle: How could it be that none of the five BMTA hikers got a tick but the four visitors counted a total of 19 ticks on them after the hike. Perhaps because they were young "30s," have that Gulf breeze saltiness, or they eat BBQ a lot (Josh owns and runs a BBQ restaurant)?

The hike was a beautiful mostly downhill 5.5 miles along a ridge line. The only drawback was the 19 mile drive to the trailhead—before the hike and again after to retrieve the cars!

We can hope that all the ticks found a new home in sweet Alabama.



Travis, Ashley, Ken, Carolyn, Mandi, Josh, Evelin, & Doug-not visible are the 19 ticks!
Photo by Tom Sewell, hike leader

Membership Report July 2018

by Darcy Douglas

We have had a steady increase in membership for 2018! The current total is 328. We also have a number of new members becoming involved in activities such as maintenance on work trips in both Georgia and Tennessee, adopting sections of trail to maintain, joining the new Blaze Team who are trying to make our trail markings more consistent with a few well-trained workers, hiking, and some showing interest in serving on the Board of Directors! One of our new corporate members lives in Tennessee, between Copperhill and Ducktown. The Pattersons offer shuttles to hikers as well as a magnificent home, cabin, and yard for camping via Airbnb. They are listed below.

As promised, the Corporate members who pay a higher rate for membership than regular folks are listed in the newsletter from time to time. Please note these organizations or businesses and use their services as you can!! Feel free to request contact information for any of these members.

Airbnb and Shuttle service
Ens and Outs
Historic Tapoco Lodge
Korean Alpine Club of Georgia

Lowery and Associates Land Surveying, LLC
North Georgia Mountain Outfitters
Save Georgia's Hemlocks
Starr Mountain Outfitters

KIOSK AT FALL BRANCH FALLS!!!

By Darcy Douglas



THANK YOU Larry Dumas!!!

Along with the reroute to an easier and more sustainable section at this beautiful part of the Benton MacKaye Trail, we will soon have an educational and informative kiosk available! Larry Dumas built the structure to USFS standards, a work crew installed it, and I have been working with the USFS staff in Blue Ridge to complete the items which will be placed inside. We have long wondered whether some information about what is about to be experienced might help visitors have a better time while taking better care of this precious resource. Areas covered include Leave No Trace Guidelines, how to take care of personal needs on the trail, a map and care of animals, both wild ones and your own. We hope to have this in place in the next month or so, with the help of the USFS!

Lake Russell Trail Hike

by Clayton Webster

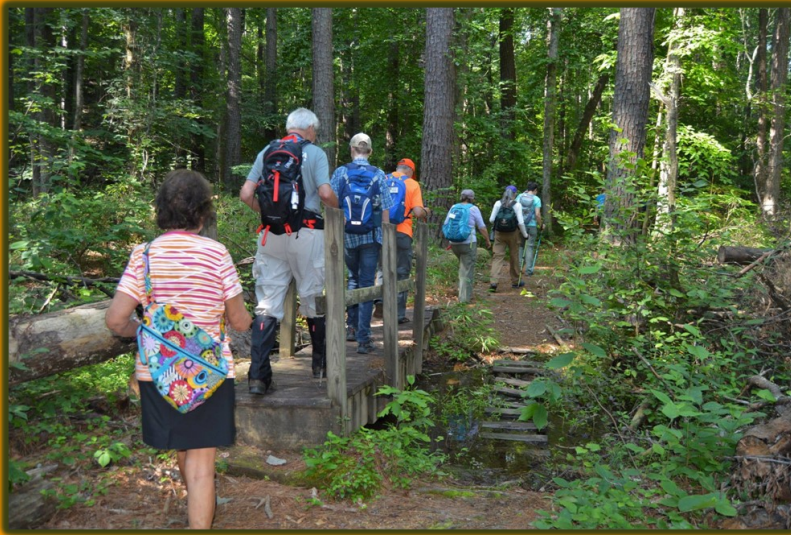
On June 15th, Clayton Webster led 15 hikers in a combined Benton MacKaye Trail Association and an Over-the-Hill Hiking Group hike on the Lake Russell Trail. The Lake Russell Trail is a five mile loop trail around the 100 acre, one mile long lake in the 17,300 acre Lake Russell Wildlife Management Area near Cornelia, GA. This is a mountain bike trail as well as a hiking trail, but we only saw a few bike tracks all day. High winds have really impacted the Lake Russell area in recent months. We saw many instances of massive blow downs all along the trail.



A nearby fisherman took our group picture on the Lake Russell Boat Dock. From the left are: Gareth Byrne, Stephanie Byrne, Cary Page, Celia Byrne, Darcy Douglas, Dale Higdon, Elizabeth Lamb, Scott Harriss, Madeline Griffin, Evelin Yarns, Doug Yarns, Clayton Webster, Andy Hans, Sandra Kaylor, and Lloyd Kaylor.

Most of the wildflowers were concentrated in just a few areas. But these areas were pretty spectacular with multi-shades of Butterfly Weed being the highlight. We saw these from very pale orange to almost red. We did see some Fire Pink, Pipsissawa, Black-eyed Susans and picked a few blackberries and blueberries.

The trail followed the lake around the small coves where fishermen were patiently trying their luck from their boats. One guy said he had done well enough to have a good lunch.



All the small streams had bridges. Since this is also a mountain bike trail, the rickety small bridge on the right is designed for them.

The lake was the prettiest we had seen it. It was at full pool or a little above. It was also very clear and clean looking. We could see lots of little fish swimming around in the coves as we circled the lake.

As we were the first hikers on the trail, the spider webs were pretty thick. We put Gareth out front and called him our "Webmaster" as he did a good job of clearing the way for us.



Everyone had been advised to wear long pants because there are several places with high weeds and poison ivy that reach across the trail. In this picture we are crossing the earthen dam. The concrete spillway is just beyond the tall pines trees up ahead. Lake Russell is notorious for mowing the dam only about one time a year. The weeds will be waist high pretty soon.

Lake Russell is an earthen dam with a concrete spillway. Once we saw the dam, it looked like we would be there shortly, but the trail leaves the lake, climbs a steep ridge, and then drops down to the dam. It took us about 25 or 30 minutes to reach the dam after we had first seen it.

On the ridge hike, we saw some very big trees that somehow had eluded the logging industry years ago. We saw some big red oaks, white oaks, loblolly pines, and beech trees.

We walked to the end of the dam to take a peek at the water going over the spillway, then backtracked a short way to a very obscure path that went straight down the dam to a poison ivy-lined trail where a bridge crossed the stream below the dam. Just across the bridge was a blow down that covered the trail. We did finally manage to get through the tangled branches with a lot of effort. We then came upon the biggest tree of the day. It was a giant loblolly pine tree that obviously loves the terrain below the dam.

From here we walked on an old Forest Service Road that provides access to the dam.

The highlight of this part of the hike was seeing a number of buckeye trees with buckeyes on them. This road comes out at an intersection that goes down to one of the two campgrounds at Lake Russell.

From here the trail goes through an area dominated by rhododendrons, small streams, and several bridges. This was another area with many major blow downs to maneuver around.



This is the type view we had most of the day. Lake Russell was just beautiful. You can tell from the sky that it was a picture perfect day to hike even if it was pretty hot. The grassy area in the distance was our lunch time destination. That is Lake Russell Beach.



Our lunch spot was a nice picnic table in the shade overlooking beautiful Lake Russell. It was a well earned break after the hike in 90+ degree weather.

After we passed through a second campground, we came to Lake Russell Beach. There were a number of picnic tables and benches in the shade, so we all relaxed while we enjoyed lunch with a great view of the lake. Steph went down to the lake, filled her hat with water, and dumped it on her head. Darcy was close behind.

We had seen two or three beaver ponds along our hike. Shortly after lunch, we came to another area where we had to detour and make a tricky stream crossing on a fallen log because the beavers had flooded an area that covered up the bridge.

After detouring around the beaver dam, we had a short walk along the main road into Lake Russell then turned back into the woods. The last part of the hike was in a pine dominated forest ending at the parking lot.

Shady Falls Trailhead to Lake Blue Ridge

By Ken Cissna

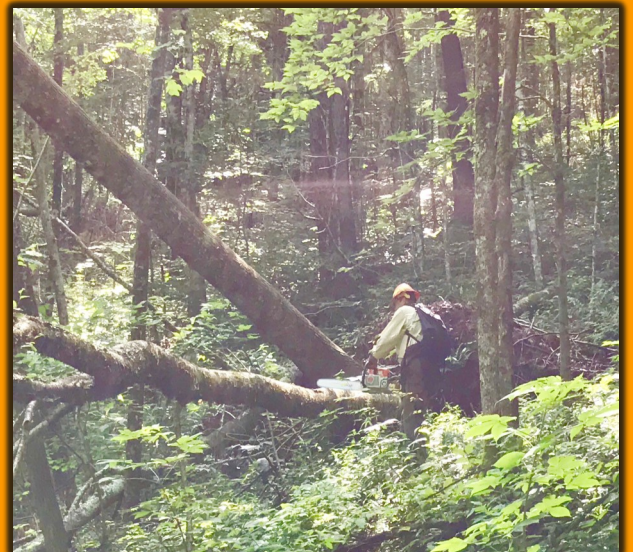
On Friday, June 22nd, five BMTA members and two guests walked about five miles from the Shady Falls Trailhead on Aska Road to Lake Blue Ridge. Those who know these trails might wonder, “But that’s only a four mile hike.” We got in a little extra mileage by walking almost half a mile just for fun the “wrong way” on the Long Branch Loop and then back while we waited for Hank Baudet to return a hiker to our meeting spot when she changed her mind about hiking (Yay, Hank!). We guessed pretty well as Hank wasn’t more than 100 yards away when we returned to the place where the Long Branch Loop splits. We then walked counter clockwise past the old homestead to the Long Branch Connector, which connects the Loop to the Green Mountain Trail. Next we took the Green Mountain Trail down to the lake. Unlike in the winter, there were no lake views to be seen until we were right on top of them. Rather than eat at trail’s end, many of us retired to Mike’s BBQ in Blue Ridge for lunch, where we were joined by BMTA member Lina Prince.



Paul McCord, Howard Baggett, Hank Baudet, Marion Crabb, Katie Klemenich, and David Schroeder.
Photo by Ken Cissna

June 23 Tennessee Work Trip Photo Journal

Courtesy of Larry Van Dyke



Conasauga Volunteers Celebrate National Trails Day

By Larry Wheat, CONF Trail Crew Leader

This year the 50th anniversary of “National Trails Day” was celebrated by Conasauga volunteers on June 2, 2018, at the Dry Creek Trail system. Sixty-three U.S. Forest Service (USFS) volunteers plus three USFS employees gathered at the popular Dry Creek Trail System to demonstrate their continued appreciation for the availability, variety and quality of natural trails for all to enjoy. The volunteers represented six volunteer organizations, plus several volunteers who were not members of an established USFS service group. The groups were the Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA), Conasauga District Trail Volunteers (CDTV), Northwest Georgia Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association (NWGA-SORBA), Back Country Horsemen of Northwest Georgia (BCHNWG), Back Country Horsemen of North Georgia (BCHNG) and the Georgia Pinhoti Trail Association (GPTA).



We began the day with normal registration paperwork, followed by welcoming remarks by Karen Larsen, Recreation Manager for the USFS-Conasauga Ranger District (CRD). Following that, Larry Wheat provided a brief safety orientation, identified 10 maintenance tasks for the day and led completion of crew assignments. Each crew leader completed specific safety reviews held at the work locations. Two tasks were modified because crews could not safely cross the creek due to high water level-the result of recent rains.

The area had experienced several days of storms that brought down trees. Barry Allen and friends faithfully scouted several trails one week prior to our workday. He identified three deadfalls that one of the BMTA crews would clear on the workday. When this crew got to their assigned location, they encountered nine deadfalls, not just the three observed one week earlier. We learned during the day that trees were down at other locations not worked by our crews on Saturday.

The main maintenance tasks at Dry Creek continue to be clearing deadfall, trimming back brush/weeds/briars encroaching on some trails and mowing the trailhead. Considerable litter pickup also occurs at the site. The trailhead was mown and trimmed a few days before the workday by local volunteers Larry and Debbie Parks.

Continued next page

We were fortunate to have chainsaw support from several BMTA volunteers who concentrated their efforts on the Green, Yellow and Pinhoti Trails. This allowed SORBA, CDTV and other volunteers to concentrate on brush/weed trimming on the Orange, Yellow and Green Trails. We had a mounted equestrian crew (five – one not in photograph) that carried a weed eater and two swing blades, and they worked on southern parts of the Red and Green Trails.



Two volunteers completed litter pickup on the FS226A road and a portion of the Green Trail that gets frequent litter. Tree limbs have been growing over the grass edge of the parking lot/trailhead, causing difficulty when mowing the parking lot with a tractor and bushhog. We took this opportunity to cut back limbs and remove some small trees, thus making it easier to mow.



Three USFS-CRD personnel fully participated in the workday celebration. One task they completed was brushing and painting the garbage bins. The bins look really nice now.



I want to give special praise to the fabulous lunch crew. Serving as a crew leader at Dry Creek for a few years I have often wanted to provide a hot lunch to the volunteers. I was especially pleased when our BCHNWG organization agreed to plan and provide a free hot lunch for all. When we agreed to do this, I estimated that we would have about 20 volunteers for lunch. That number grew to become 66. Marlene Hayes agreed to coordinate/manage the lunch. She received good planning support from Karen Larsen. Many volunteers provided side dishes and dessert. Some provided money donations to defray expenses. Anthony Emanuel, Kathy Henson and Eddie Henson added their experience, support and equipment. It was marvelous to behold as the picnic area became covered with canopies to provide shade for the hungry volunteers. A delicious lunch was provided for all. Iced drinks were also available. Thank you lunch team!!



Following lunch we offered a brief refresher training/demonstration on recommended trail etiquette when cyclists and equestrians meet on shared trails. Larry Wheat and Bill Hester led the activity, with active participation by Steve Harrell on a bicycle and Jami Sullivan on her horse. Perhaps the key things to remember when meeting or overtaking another trail user are to be vocal, respectful and courteous.



The NTD workday celebration ended mid-afternoon. The day's weather was hot, about 90, and humid. We did not have any rain which was a welcome break from several days of hot, rainy and stormy weather. Lots of needed trail maintenance was accomplished with no injuries to our volunteers. Karen Larsen summarized our thoughts with *"it was great to see representatives from all our partner groups come together for a day of fun, fellowship and service to benefit the trails community"*.

As one workday ends, we soon prepare for the next one. During the day we learned of additional deadfall due to storms, and brush that needs trimmed. Our next trail workday is planned for **Saturday, July 14th**. We would love to see many volunteers share that day with us. Thank you to everyone for making this a great "Happy 50th Celebration" trail workday.

Jim Mathis, BMTA Member, Alpine Tour Leader, Dies

By George Owen



Jim "Gunny" Mathis

Jim at the Matterhorn.

James Earl "Jim" Mathis of Marietta, GA and a member of BMTA for several recent years died May 26 at his home. Jim Mathis was the owner of Alpine Hiking Vacations, a company that led tours in the Swiss Alps. BMTA current Vice-President George Owen served as a guide for him and several of our BMTA members attended the company's tours. He was 79, and had been in declining health in recent months.

A retiree from the U.S. Government Printing Office and U.S. Treasury Department, he held degrees from the University of Maryland and American University, with a master's degree from the latter. Jim is survived by his wife Susan, a brother, sister, and many nieces and nephews.

For some years after his retirement, Jim worked as a guide and partner in Alpine Adventure Trails Tours before forming his own company. Several of our folks in BMTA and other area hiking clubs got to know him then when touring with that company. Jim in turn learned about the BMTA, and subsequently joined our association. Off-and-on illnesses and overall declining health in recent years kept him from some of our activities, but he especially loved to come for the BMTA annual meeting weekends.

An early morning memorial service was held for Jim on Saturday, June 23, at the large pavilion at Laurel Park in Marietta. George Owen was one of the participants in the service that was led by Jim's hospice chaplain. Jim's cremated ashes will be carried to be scattered atop the Matterhorn Mountain in Switzerland, which Jim summited at age 55.



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 couple of months are listed below. We’re moving into the hotter summer weather and featuring more “water” hikes—you might want to wear your water shoes and take your hiking poles for the stream crossings. More hikes will be forthcoming, so check the Activities Calendar of the website and next month’s newsletter for updates. Enjoy.

July

July 7 (Saturday) Flat Creek Loop.

5.6 miles, moderate. In Aska Trail System.

Contact hike leader Howard Baggett at howardeb AT windstream.net

July 9 (Monday) In the Cohuttas: BMT from Watson Gap to Dyer Gap.

5 miles, easy to moderate. 4 mile shuttle on dirt road.

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

July 10 (Tuesday) Emery Creek in Cohuttas.

5 miles, moderate. The trail itself is fairly easy, but 26 stream crossings (a number up to your ankles and two your knees), a bunch of downed trees that have to be traversed (over, under, and around), and a section of potentially slippery rock toward the beginning and again at the end make it more difficult than it otherwise would be. Holly and Emery Creeks, two waterfalls, and a nice shady trail make it worth the trouble.

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

July 23 (Monday) Quiet, meditative hike on Boling Park/Etowah River trails in Canton.

4-6 miles, moderate.

Contact hike leader Darcy Douglas at bmtadarcy AT yahoo.com

July 26 (Thursday) BMT (Sections 12-13) from Reliance to Lost Creek Campground and back.

8 miles, easy. Creek crossing plus see Hiwassee River.

Contact Hike Leader Clare Sullivan at clare7982 AT gmail.com

August

August 10 (Friday) BMT – Highway 60 to Suspension Bridge and back.
7.4 miles, moderate. Lunch on the bank of the Toccoa River (bring your own!)

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

August 16 (Thursday) Clemmer Trail Hike.
4.3 miles, moderate. Gradually uphill. Ocoee area.

Contact hike leader Clare Sullivan at clare7982 AT gmail.com.

August 17 (Friday) Talking Rock Nature Preserve Trails.
6 miles, easy to moderate.

Contact hike leader Darcy Douglas at bmtadarcy AT yahoo.com

August 31 (Friday) BMT: Beech Gap (4400') to Whigg Meadow (4,940').
6.4 miles, moderate difficulty. Cherohala area. Option to camp or hotel overnight in Tellico Plains for those interested in Friday/Saturday combo.

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

September

September 1 (Saturday) BMT: Whigg Meadow (4940') to Fish Hatchery at Tellico River (2120').
7.3 miles, moderate. Virtually all downhill. Long shuttle.

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

September 12 (Wednesday) Cartecay Loop.
4 miles, easy to moderate mostly along the Cartecay River.

Contact hike leader Sara Bland at jsbland AT windstream.net

September 28 (Friday) BMT: Patterson Ridge Plunge.
Approximately 5 miles, easy plus; approximately 2.5 hours on the trail.
This leisurely hike samples the great views (and posh houses) along Patterson Ridge in the Sisson Cherry Lake community and then follows a little used section of the BMT for a long downhill to Boardtown Road. After a break we will hike back to the ridge at a leisurely pace. Much of the trail follows a nice stream with excellent stands of Creeping Cedar and Galax. With luck we will enjoy some early fall color. After the hike, those who wish will head to Blue Jeans Pizza in Blue Ridge for a recovery ale and lunch.

Contact hike leaders Tom and Jane Keene at tkbmta AT gmail DOT com or 770-548-4935 (text ok).

**The BMTA Annual Meeting is November 2-4 at Coker Creek
Don't Miss Out!!**

The deadline for the August Newsletter is August 1, 2018. Thank you!