



Points of Interest

Click the title to go directly to the page.

President's Column

More Cabins Available

Hemp Top Hike

May Work Trips

AT&T Community Day

Tennessee Work Trip

Mulky Gap

Talking Rock Trails

Hemlock Camp Meeting

Nantahala Book Review

"Artsy" BMTA

Upcoming Hikes

BMTA Officers 2017-2018

President:	Tom Keene
Vice President:	George Owen
Secretary:	Joy Forehand
Treasurer:	Margaret Meadows
GA M/C:	Barry Allen
TN/NC M/C:	Vacant
Smokies Coord:	Larry Dumas
Hiking Director:	Ken Cissna
Store:	Ken Cissna
Membership:	Darcy Douglas
Publicity:	Jeff DePaola
Conservation:	Dave Ricker
Past President:	Bob Ruby
Newsletter:	Kathy Williams
State Rep GA:	Bob Cowdrick
State Rep TN/NC:	Rick Harris



BMTA Headquarters



President's Column

Important Progress on Trail Maintenance Annual Meeting News und Der Wanderwege

A New Facebook Maintenance Page

Thanks to good work by **Rick Harris** and useful contributions by **Barry Allen** and **Phil Guhl**, the BMTA now has a new Facebook page focused on maintenance activity. Details of upcoming work trips are posted there as well as reports on the trips once they are finished – usually with some excellent shots of folks hard at work in the woods! Even if you are not directly involved in maintaining the **BMT**, the page is a great way to get a sense of all the work members do to keep the trail in good shape. The url is <https://www.facebook.com/BMTAMaintenance/>. Take a look; it's almost as good as being on the work trip yourself!

Cherokee National Forest Work Trip Leaders Get to It!

The last Saturday of May, **Phil** and **Debra Guhl** led a work trip on a section of the BMT along the Hiwassee River between Forest Service Road 22B and Wildcat Creek (Section 13e). This trip is a milestone. It represented the first in a calendar-year of monthly work trips organized by the “graduates” of a March 10-11 training program for work trip leaders. Thanks to **Ryan Farr** and his colleagues at the Cherokee National Forest, Ocoee Ranger District Office for a highly productive workshop. See **Phil's** fuller account of the trip (with photos) on page 8. Well done to all involved!

Annual Meeting Update

A prompt response by members to the announcement of the BMTA Annual Meeting November 2-4 at Coker Creek Village soon revealed a shortage of available rooms for attendees near the site. BMTA VP **George Owen** and Planning Committee member **Darcy Douglas** responded with a quick follow-up trip to the area to scout out alternate lodging possibilities. They were delighted with what they found. Read **George's** report on page 3 for more information.

Continued next page

Blaze of the Month – *Der Wanderwege*



During the middle two weeks of May, I had the pleasure of accompanying the charming (and multi-lingual!) **Jane Keene** to Europe. We spent a week in Vienna, Austria. Naturally we felt it our duty to check the quality and placement of the blazes along the famous footpaths nearby. This one is outside the village of Kahlenberg where we had a delightful visit.

The footpaths (*der Wanderwege*) outside Vienna have quite a history. They are among the earliest examples of “modern” footpaths, established and maintained mainly for the relaxation of stressed-out city dwellers. Only in the late 1700’s, as the Romantic era dawned in Europe, did locals begin to see the forests around them as places of beauty and inspiration. Before that time forests were seen as dark, deep, and full of danger – places to avoid. It was Little Red Riding Hood’s experience of the wilderness – a long way from John Muir’s “Window on the Divine.”



A combination of culture and geography helped Vienna lead the way to a new attitude toward nature. Between 1750 and 1850 the city emerged as a great center of the arts, especially music. Mozart, Beethoven and many other greats lived and worked there. Vienna’s setting also played a part. Famously situated beside the Danube River on its north and west sides, Vienna nestles up closely to a range of foothills that extend across Austria from the Alps.

The hills are similar in size and vegetation to the mountains of North Georgia. The city is close by. For a Georgia comparison, think of Atlanta shifted northward to Ellijay! In the landscape shot below, taken from a café in Kahlenberg, some of Vienna’s Danube bridges can be seen top left. The old city is to the right of those bridges. Today Vienna’s Tram #2 takes you in 25 easy minutes from the middle of the old city to an alpine village like Kahlenberg in the those hills. Even in the 18th century it was not hard to get out for a few days of rejuvenating walks in the woods. Many famous musicians and other artists did just that – Mozart and Beethoven, for instance. They and other nature-loving Viennese helped to popularize the idea of footpaths in the deep woods as a sanctuary of beauty and calm. Their walks in the hills north and west of their capitol city helped open the world’s eyes to a new view of nature.



It must be admitted there is one other factor in the appeal of the Vienna Woods. Look again at the landscape shot. You will see signs of the “other factor” in the foreground and top right. Large areas of the lower foothills have long been cleared of forest and planted in vineyards. These produce a refreshing white wine that cafes in villages like Kahlenberg serve to the users of *der Wanderwege*.

I hesitate to say the result is a window on the divine, but I recommend the experience.

More Cabins Available Very Near Meeting Site

by George Owen, Chair, 2018 BMTA Annual Meeting Committee

Several cabins, nice and more spacious than at Coker Creek Campground, are now available to first come, first serve - just over one-half mile from our November 2-4 BMTA Annual Meeting site. The price varies with the cabin between \$60 and \$80 (tax included) per night.

The location is just 0.6 (yes, 6/10ths) mile south of the Coker Creek Campground, the **Mountain Creek Hideaway & Grille**. The restaurant is the only place in this part of the county licensed to sell beer and has a variety of short order foods, including pizza. Rick Harris recommended we check out the place, so on May 29 George Owen drove to the location and here are the several cabins available:

- Cabin 7 - two bedrooms, one with two double beds, the other with a king bed, bathroom, kitchen, sitting area.
- Cabin 9 - bedroom with kitchen and bathroom
- Cabin 11 - king bed with kitchen, bathroom
- Cabin 10 - no kitchen or bathroom - two double beds and some bunks. Use the nearby shower house.

All four available cabins are non-smoking. Make reservations soon due to popularity in the fall.

Contact Bob Phetteplace for info, reservations at 423-261-7100.

THREE 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.

Hiking to Hemp Top

by Tom Sewell

On April 1, Tom Sewell led Carolyn, Evelin and Doug Yarns, Michael Pilvinsky, Ken Cissna and Everett Womack to Hemp Top.

This hike starts with a beautiful drive on Old GA 2 to its termination in the Cohuttas. An additional three miles along the dirt road culminates the road trip at Dally Gap. We hiked up the Hemp Top Trail to where it joins the BMT at Spanish Oaks. This is a gentle climb of 900 feet passing by the Penitentiary Trail. We continued on to the old remains of the Old Hemp Top Tower, as this was our rest stop.

We returned to our starting point instead of traversing on to Big Frog Mountain.

It was an incredibly beautiful eight mile hike!



Loose in the Cohuttas are Carolyn, Evelin and Doug Yarns, Michael Pilvinsky, Ken Cissna and Everett Womack.

May Work Trips

by Barry Allen

DOUBLE THE WORK, DOUBLE THE FUN—TENNESSEE AND GEORGIA ALL IN ONE (DAY!!!)

Have you ever had a project that just seems to go on forever? I mean no matter how many ‘one last things’ you think you have taken care of, there is always **one last thing**. Fall Branch Falls fits this to a tee. On Saturday, May 12, our group of volunteers had several ‘one last things’ to accomplish.

The week prior to our normal second Saturday event, Phil Guhl assembled a group of AT&T volunteers and BMTA members to work on placement of water diversions along the old Fall Branch Trail with the use of the Forest Service ditch witch trail machine. (These diversions are intended to help the old trail silt in and eventually repair itself.) Other volunteers from AT&T worked to install passing areas on the new trail and to rebuild a bump wall at the top of the Falls.

By Saturday, May 12th, our list of ‘one last things’ included installing and painting a fence at the entrance of the old trail, prepping, seeding and strawing the water diversions to minimize erosion, and dragging debris into the old trail. This tough work was completed with the help of 16 volunteers on a warm May morning.

Larry Dumas took the lead on the fence project and with a persistent team of volunteers, managed to get all the post holes dug in a long morning of hard labor. By early afternoon, the new fence was complete and assembled in all its elegance. And let me just say, unless you took a hand in digging these fence posts through the rock of Fall Branch, you’ll never truly appreciate the labor involved.



Debra Guhl led our group of painters, managing to get much of the fence painted before it was assembled, then touching up the finished fence as needed. Husband Phil Guhl took the lead on prepping and seeding the old trail as well as dragging brush into the trail to discourage hikers. All other painters, seeders and post hole diggers did outstanding work, finishing assigned tasks before 3:00. First timers Nancy and Jay Watlington and Cynthia Tehan were much appreciated. Great new additions! And while this hard work was being done by others, 'yours truly' snuck off to.....

Tennessee and project number two. Back in March, our volunteer day had included repairing a bridge and hauling in material for step repairs on Section 11. On this Saturday in May, while one group worked Fall Branch Falls in Georgia, we had a second group gather in Tennessee to work on step repairs at Thunder Rock Campground.

Mike Kovitch took the lead with this team, aided by Kim Murrell, Hank Baudet, Larry Van Dyke and Butch Watson. I arrived in Tennessee 'long about 11:00 after the task was well in hand. Hank Baudet had gathered tools and shuttled them to Tennessee early on Saturday. When I arrived, new member Kim Murrell was hauling timbers from the base of the steps to the top of the new run, Mike was placing timbers, Larry was cutting timbers and our own Dr. Watson was hard at work excavating for the new steps. Then I happened to look up, and Kim was swinging an eight lb sledgehammer like it was going out of style. Never a miss and the rebar went home true. Wow, what a woman! What a group of volunteers!

By 3:00, all the material we hauled in March had vanished into the mountainside. And of course, there is always one more thing – a couple of additional steps to replace -- which we'll get to in coming months. Thanks to you all. This was my first multi-state work trip in a single day. What fun! Never a dull moment.



AT&T Community Day 2018

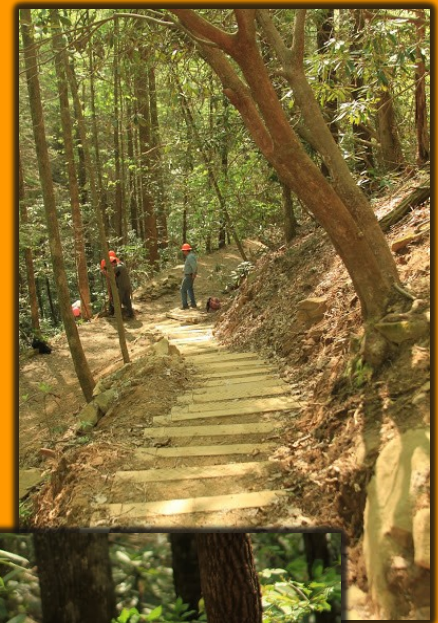
by Phil Guhl

Every year AT&T gives its employees a full paid day to volunteer for a 501(c)3 organization of which the BMTA is one. May 4th was the fourth AT&T Community Day on the BMT.

Six folks from AT&T and one from an AT&T vendor came out to help close the old route on Section 6b at Fall Branch Falls. Along with them came 14 members of the BMTA to work alongside and mentor the AT&T folks as John Stephens of the US Forest Service worked the trail with the Ditch Witch Trail Machine. The reroute was widened at strategic places to allow for passing, two signs were installed, rocks were replaced on the stub wall, and the Ditch Witch installed grade reversals to give a finishing touch to route water off the trail. All in all it was a fun and productive day.

Many thanks go out to AT&T and their employees for this wonderful program and we look forward to many of these opportunities in the coming years.

AT&T employees in attendance were Byron Beauchamp, Ken Burks, Jeremy Fix, Ravi Doejode, Shane Morrison, and Don Kenny. The AT&T vendor was Patrick Ward.



May Tennessee Work Trip

by Phil Guhl with photos courtesy of Lynette Linn

Due to the need for additional Trained Maintenance Trip Leaders in Tennessee, several folks from the Benton MacKaye Trail Association attended training on March 10 and 11 provided by the Cherokee National Forest, Ocoee Ranger District. Topics covered were: 1) Trail design, Layout, and Construction, 2) Trail Maintenance Best Practices, and 3) Crew Leadership. Those in attendance were: Rick Harris, Larry Dumas Darcy Douglas, Debra Guhl, Phil Guhl, Clare Sullivan, Ed Sullivan, John Zardis, Ralph Van Pelt, Larry Van Dyke and Kim Murrel.

The attendees made a commitment to lead at least two trips in Tennessee over the next two years. The crews will continue to utilize the traditional fourth Saturday of every month for Tennessee. That rotation started this month, May 2018.

Phil and Debra Guhl were at the helm, on the 26th, as a crew of very abled volunteers cleared almost three miles of trail from Forest Service Road 22B to near Wildcat Creek (Section 13e). Tennessee folks drove directly to the trailhead while Georgia folks commuted via a carpool caravan.



This section is in need of being adopted. It has beautiful views overlooking the Hiwassee River and a couple of relatively easy creek crossings—although several folks chose to take a dip, whether intentionally or not. There is a need for some good blazing on this section, but due to the forecasted 80% chance of rain it did not get accomplished...ultimately, there was not even a drop of moisture outside of the sweat rolling off the tips of people's chins.

The tools for the day were a chainsaw, brush cutters, sling blades, loppers, and a Pulaski. Every member worked diligently and tirelessly to clear the corridor and improve the safety of the tread. The crew split into two teams. One team (Barry, Becky, Larry, James, Dale, and John) took the far side of Loss Creek and brushed out about two miles of the trail towards Wildcat Creek. The second team (Debra, Clare, Brenda, Lynette, Ed, and Rick) cleared the trail from the trailhead to Loss Creek.



About three miles of the trail were worked where there were a number of blowdowns cleared, the corridor was cut back to roughly four feet wide and six feet high, a number of switchbacks and grade reversals were cleared and/or improved, and the tread was widened to 24 inches in three places where the slough had made it hazardous to traverse. Clare Sullivan will schedule getting the blazes done once the wet weather subsides a bit.

There was great teamwork and super work ethic. Everyone did a wonderful job. Special recognition goes to:

- John....for carrying the saw and cutting out the entire ~ 3 miles
- Rick....for brush cutting a path for ~1.3 miles to Loss Creek non-stop
- Brenda....for lopping 2.3 metric tons of Mountain Laurel
- Barry "the Machine" Allen....for breaking in and breaking Phil's brush cutter in the process of ridding the trail of all privet
- Becky....for being on her first maintenance trip
- Lynette....for coming back after her first maintenance trip and being the official photographer
- Dale....for trying to keep up with Barry on the brush cutter
- Larry....for doing the backstroke in Loss Creek
- Clare....for hand excavating the trail
- Ed....for stealing Debra's loppers
- James....for his hygiene practices in Coker Creek
- Debra....for being my Sweetie Cakes

The spirit of the team was alive with the BMTA's mantra "...leave a footpath for generations to follow!"

Please come out and join us next month, on the 4th Saturday as we attempt to tackle Section 16d (Brookshire Creek >> Sugar Mountain Road). Check your emails and/or Facebook for details!

Mulky Gap Lady Slipper and Wildflower Hike

By Joy Forehand with photos courtesy of Janet Fried and Susan Roberts

The second of May turned out to be a bright, sunny day ... a welcome break from the recent unseasonably frigid temperatures. Twenty-three hikers joined hiker leader Joy Forehand for the first Mulky Gap Lady Slipper and Wildflower Hike.



Pink Lady Slippers

Before getting their backpacks the group walked across USFS Road 4 and up the Duncan Ridge Trail where hundreds of the Pink Lady Slippers were waiting to be enjoyed. Several large gardens of the pink beauties spanned about a 300-yard climb up Akin Mountain.

Then it was back to the trailhead to pick up the backpacks and embark on the second leg of the hike. A rather large man-made hole in the ground was the first item of interest. It was, in fact, a tank trap that had been installed to discourage four-wheelers from using the trail.

After a short climb, the trail leveled off and False Green Helbore seemed to be everywhere. Hikers also began to see patches of Dwarf Crested Iris, a few large clumps of Squaw Root and another wild orchid, Rattlesnake Plantain. As the hike continued, large gardens of May Apples and ferns interspersed with Grandiflora Trillium dotted the landscape.

Continued next page

The group paused for lunch before continuing on the old roadbed. It was in this area hikers found what probably was the most impressive find of the day -- a pink Showy Orcis! Also a wild orchid, the Showy Orcis is on the endangered or threatened list in several states.



Rattlesnake Plantain



May Apple



White Grandiflora Trillium



Pink Grandiflora Trillium



Pink Showy Orcis

The way back to the trailhead included another portion of the Duncan Ridge Trail. In past years, some of the largest Lady Slippers in the area as well as Flame Azaleas were found along this stretch. Unfortunately this year's late freezes had taken their toll. Lady Slipper buds hung by threads and there was not a bud to be found on the Flame Azaleas.

Exploring New Trails at Talking Rock Nature Preserve

by Ken Cissna

The newly opened Talking Rock Nature Preserve was until recently a pine tree farm—and it shows. Lots of pines, and wild flowers. In 2012, the land was donated to the Southeastern Trust for Parks and Lands, and it is now legally preserved for all time. Talking Rock Nature Preserve now includes five miles of dual-use (mountain biking and hiking) trails. We walked four miles, the 2.75 mile easy Green Loop and the 1.25 mile only slightly more difficult Blue Loop, on May 14th, what had been, until then, easily the hottest day of the year so far. Had the day not been so hot, we probably would have done the other mile. We'll have to build up to that. Instead, most of the group adjourned to Bigun's BBQ for a nice lunch.



An arch of trees framed our way beautifully!

The Preserve includes 220 acres and the master plan includes a variety of features in addition to the trails it now has, including a 5-7 mile more difficult trail. Two Boy Scout Eagle projects have been completed to date and are obvious as one walks the trails—we enjoyed the benches and picnic tables.

Two guests (Vic Porter and Elise Howell) joined eight members (Hank Baudet, Sara Bland, Darcy Douglas, Lydia Kieft, Lina Prince, Nancy Sauls, Kathy Williams, and hike leader, Ken Cissna) for this hike.

Continued next page



Looking for your dream cabin?! 4 sale!!



Mountain Laurel were everywhere.



Sweet something.



What a great idea to ensure safety for all!



Ah, nothing like picnic tables and benches in the wilderness.



Hmm. Nitro?



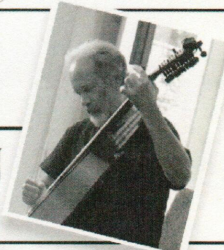
Feasting-the goal of every hike!

THE 2018 ANNUAL
 SAVE GEORGIA'S HEMLOCKS
HEMLOCK CAMP MEETING
 A
 GATHERING OF
 KINDRED SPIRITS TO CELEBRATE AND PRESERVE
 THE MAGNIFICENT HEMLOCK

SUNDAY • JUNE 24 • 11AM to 3PM
LAKE WINFIELD SCOTT • GROUP SHELTER • SUCHES, GA

MAPS AND DIRECTIONS www.SaveGeorgiasHemlocks.org or **GOOGLE MAPS**

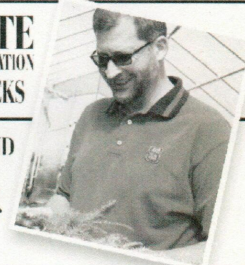
MUSIC ACOUSTIC GUITARIST EXTRAORDINAIRE **ED DOWLING**



 **SMOKIN' GOLD FOOD** BRING YOUR OWN BBQ PROVIDED **FOOD** Potluck Picnic Dish

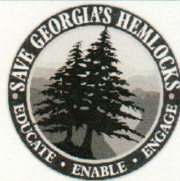
RESERVATIONS are required before **WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20** **\$5 ADMISSION**
 CALL 706 455-2313 EMAIL KimberlyRaeWood@gmail.com **KIDS UNDER 10 FREE**

COME HEAR DR. BEN SMITH NC STATE MTN RESEARCH STATION
 THE QUEST FOR ADELGID-RESISTANT HEMLOCKS



DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY TO COMMUNE WITH NATURE AND TO CELEBRATE THE HEMLOCK AND OUR MOUNTAIN ENVIRONMENT - AN EVENT FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY. SORRY, NO DOGS ARE ALLOWED.

SPONSORED BY



SAVE GEORGIA'S HEMLOCKS

- Raising public awareness of the hemlock crisis and call for help.
- Recognizing and thanking our members, volunteers and supporters.
- Learning about progress in the HWA battle, the latest research and ways to help.

www.SaveGeorgiasHemlocks.org • 706 429-8010

Nantahala National Forest: A History by Marci Spencer

Reviewed by George Owen

If someone reads a certain author's book and then goes out immediately and purchases two more of said author's books, then you would naturally suspect said reader really enjoyed that author. Such happened when I recently read Marci Spencer's book, *Nantahala National Forest: A History*.

Perhaps two requisites are necessary to enjoy this book to its fullest, an appreciation of history and a love of the outdoors in the Southern Appalachians. If this fits you, then I invite you to explore this work by Ms. Spencer, our BMTA Annual Meeting speaker on November 3.

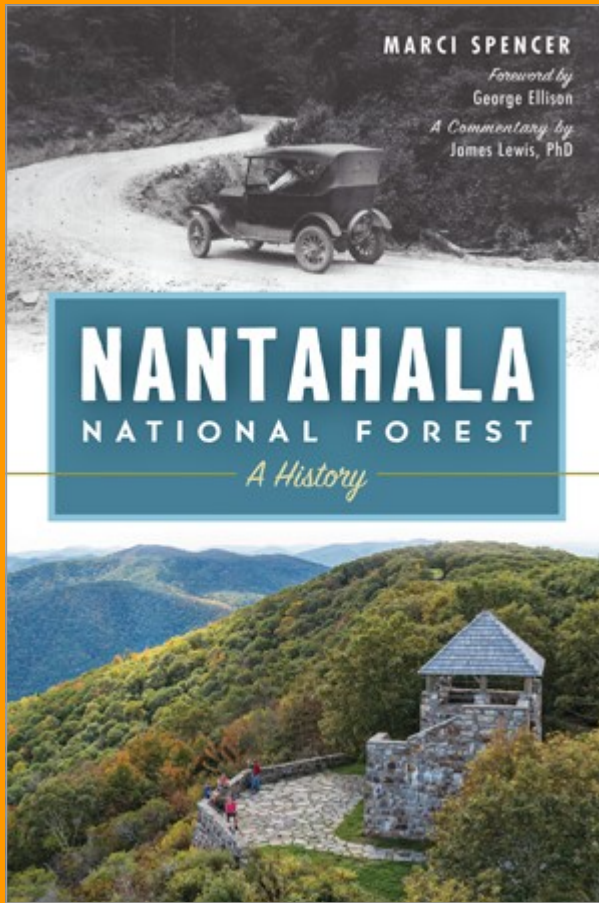
This 255 page work on one of the National Forests through which our beloved Benton MacKaye Trail travels is the author's fourth and was just published in 2017. A previous book by Marci on the Pisgah National Forest was issued in 2014.

As one who has trampled over numerous areas of North Carolina's 500,000+ acres of the Nantahala National Forest for 50 years, I was surprised at how many places Marci describes that I either had not yet visited or didn't know about them. Her love for the land and the broad and gracious picture of that great and early National Forest entity in extreme southwestern North Carolina is obvious. There are herein portrayed many places I have visited that her more detailed information about their history have made me wish to return to those sites with new understanding for them, such as the old and preserved Wilson Lick Ranger Station that I have passed dozens of times on the gravel Forest Service road to visit Wayah Bald - there's an entire five-page chapter on this building.

Names with some wonderful personal stories make up a significant part of this history. Marci includes much history across the entire forest, from the Native American Cherokee times until today. Yet after introductory materials, she begins her first chapter with a lively plane crash story that over several pages involves some mystery, money and drugs, and a cocaine-overdosed black bear. Following this fascinating story, we are soon off and traveling across the wilds of the Nantahala National Forest, district by district, with wonderful and delightful sites therein. Ranges, waterfalls, challenging road building are all featured. Black-and-white photographs are scattered all through this volume, with a center-book section of color photos.

And, yes, the Benton MacKaye Trail is mentioned also, in the book's latter pages. A special feature of that takes up almost the entire page 171, an article entitled "MacKaye and I" by our own former BMTA president, Dick Evans. Also, on pages 166-169 is a brief summary on the BMT and our big trail completion ceremony at Mud Gap on the Cherohala Skyway in 2005.

I must confess I also loved this work because it features an entire chapter on one of my personal heroes, Rev. Rufus Morgan, the great "father figure" of the Appalachian Trail through the Nantahalas - the person who almost alone at times kept that trail open during the difficult World War II years and shortly thereafter. It was my privilege to meet him twice in the latter half of the twentieth century before he died.



So much else is covered in some detail, places familiar to many of us as travel and hiking designations: Standing Indian, Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory, Panthertown Valley, Cullasaja Gorge, Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest and the surrounding wilderness, Cherohala Skyway, Fontana Dam and lake, etc., etc. Just glancing through this book again made me wish to leave my computer while writing this, sink into my car, and drive the few miles from my house to the Nantahala National Forest and just hike and visit wonderful sites. Topping it off, the author has a flair for writing and knows how create an eye-catching phrase.

In conclusion, I only have one minor negative about the book: no index. Marci's two other books on significant outdoor places that I am reading, both works on the Pisgah National Forest and on Clingman's Dome, each has a good index. Thus I have wondered why she did not include one for her latest publication. Folks such as I who love to return to outdoor books for future references live partly by indexes to save time in finding particular subjects.

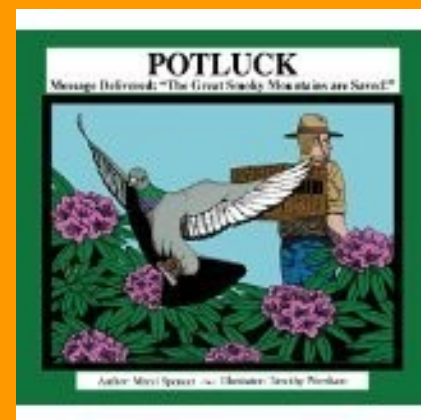
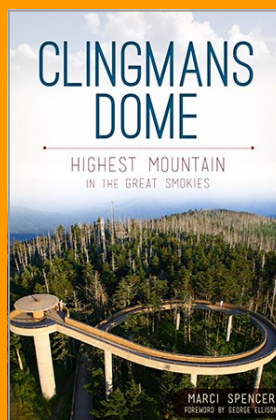
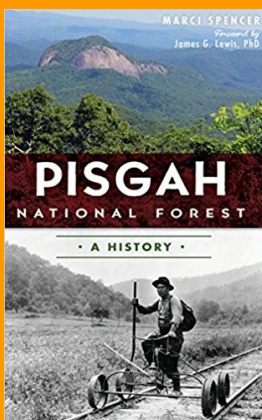
So...lovers of the outdoors, I most heartily invite you to the Nantahala through the eyes of one of our newer BMTA members, Marci Spencer. I've already convinced two people from the U.S. Forest Service to buy the book, and I'm enthusiastically promoting it with many others. Now I am finishing her books on the Pisgah National Forest and Clingmans Dome - also very enjoyable.

OTHER BOOKS BY MARCI SPENCER:

Pisgah National Forest: A History, 2014

Clingman's Dome: Highest Mountain in the Great Smokies, 2013

Potluck, Message Delivered: The Great Smoky Mountains Are Saved (this last a children's book based on a true story)



BMTA Goes “Artsy”

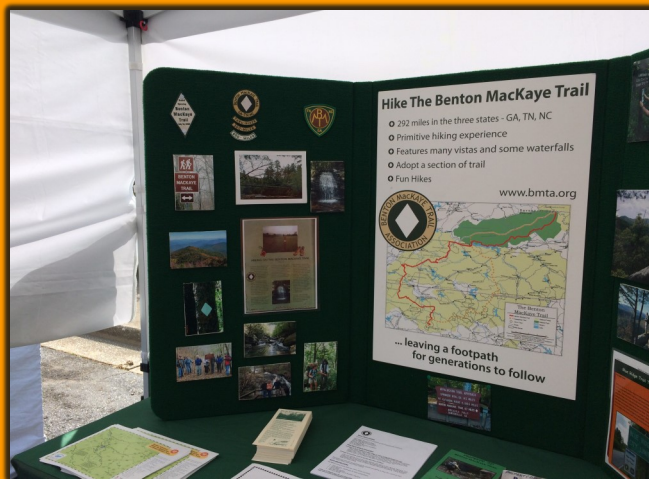
by The Publicity Committee

Undaunted by the 80 – 90% chance of thunderstorms, the Publicity Team optimistically set up BMTA’s tent at the Spring Blue Ridge Arts in the Park Festival. That optimism was justified as the tent soon was filled with people asking questions about hiking, BMTA hikes that are open to the public and, of course, trail maintenance.

Our volunteers also enjoyed hearing about the many memorable experiences festival participants recounted about their time on the BMT. The most unique account was relayed by a young family. A family friend, hiked the BMT once, hiked it again and then again and again. In fact, the young man was so impressed with the trail ... when his son was born, he named him “MacKaye Benton”. They call him “Mac”.

The maintainer recruitment drive was highly successful with almost 50 people expressing an interest in participating in trail maintenance!

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered their time and expertise to make this event a success – Ben Yaun; Jeff DePaola; Marge and Ralph Heller; Tom Keene; Clara and Ed Sullivan; Bob Brown; Larry Dumas; Ken Cissna; and Joy and Frank Forehand.



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.

For more details, contact hike leader Ken Cissna at kcissna AT usf.edu or 706-636-1741

June

June 5 (Tuesday) BMT Dry Gap to Thunder Rock Campground on the Kimsey “Highway.” 5.7 miles; moderate. Starts with an uphill $\frac{3}{4}$ mile 500 feet elevation then downhill all the way to the Ocoee River.

This is a spectacular hike mostly along a ridge. Fifteen mile shuttle. Kimsey “Highway” is a historic Indian Trail. Views at the top of the Hiwassee River Watershed are breath taking. Given the lengthy shuttle, we may do this as a “key exchange” if enough sign up for this event. The two hike leaders are willing to do the harder/uphill portion of the hike.

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

June 10 (Sunday) Identifying Mushrooms in Boling Park/Etowah River Trails 4-5 miles, moderate. We’re hoping the mushrooms are as plentiful this year as they were last year.

Contact hike leaders Howard Baggett and Lydia Kieft at howardeb AT windstream.net

June 15 (Friday) Lake Russell Trail.

5 mile loop, easy. Optional additional 2.7 mile loop to Nancy Town Falls (also easy).

Around beautiful Lake Russell in the 17,300 acre Lake Russell WMA near Cornelia, GA. Great scenery and abundant wildlife. We will start at Nancy Town Lake, circle Lake Russell, cross the dam, and walk through a nice campground, picnic area, and swimming beach.

Contact hike leader Clayton Webster at webs4740 AT bellsouth.net or at 404-633-8955

June 22 (Friday) Shady Falls to Lake Blue Ridge using the Long Branch Loop to Long Branch Connector to Green Mountain Trail.

4 miles, easy to moderate. In Aska Trail System.

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

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 13 (Friday) Emery Creek in Cohuttas.

5 miles, easy to moderate. In and out. Twenty stream crossings – water up to your knees! Two waterfalls.

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

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](mailto:bmtadarcy@yahoo.com)

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



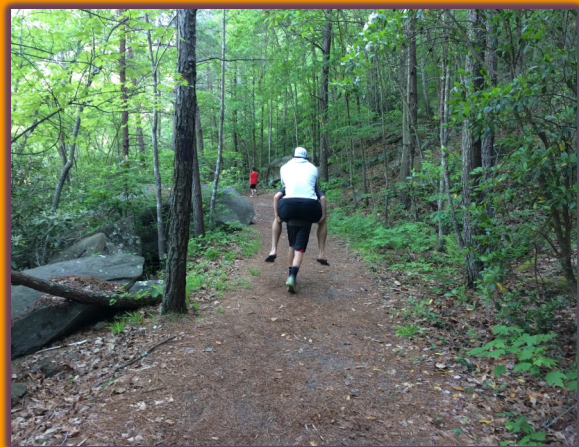
Jackson age 7 "Following footsteps."



"So where in the trails and parks" was Tom in last month's newsletter? He was in front of the Fort Marr Blockhouse at the state park ranger station at Hiwassee Ocoee State Park! Get more information at <http://tennesseeverhil.com/fort-marr-blockhouse/>



Bridges upon bridges.



Hmm. "Backpacking."

The deadline for the July Newsletter is July 4, 2018. Thank you!