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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



Benton MacKaye Trail Association

VOLUME 35, ISSUE 10

OCTOBER 2018

President's Column

Get Involved!

Five (5) Opportunities to Contribute

#1 Vote YES November 6 - Georgia's Amendment #1

Here's one for everyone living in Georgia – and all your friends...

It's called the *Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Amendment*. It does **not** increase taxes. (So tell even your most anti-government friends they can vote "yes" for a change!)

What the amendment will do is to provide a constitutional assurance that 80% of the state sales taxes collected via sales of outdoor recreation equipment in the state will be used to conserve Georgia's lands and waters and to support efforts to develop parks and trails as well as places to fish and hunt. Anticipated revenues: \$20 million a year for 10 years – i.e. \$200 million!

Georgia legislators have long endorsed the concept of this targeted use of the taxes collected on outdoor recreation equipment, but when faced with awkward budget choices have often raided the fund for other causes, making planning impossible for conservation and outdoor recreation officials. The passage of Amendment #1 will end these raids.

Check out the website of the impressive coalition supporting the amendment, [HERE](#).

The take-away is simple – "Vote Yes for Amendment #1 in Georgia."

#2 Become the BMTA's Sign Coordinator

The BMTA is looking for someone to serve as overall coordinator of signage along our trail. The job will involve building and maintaining a database on the placement and condition of signs along the trail as well as taking the lead in ordering new signs and coordinating their installation as needed. We can usually locate volunteers to install new or replacement signs, but we need a (mostly) back-office person to help us track and maintain signage along the trail. Interested? Check in with **Ralph Heller** (rshbmta AT gmail DOT com). Ralph has made an excellent start on this work, can answer questions about what is involved, and will be glad to help with the transition.

Continued next page

#3, #4 and #5. Join the BMTA Website Rebuild Team

At our August meeting, after over a year of committee meetings and discussions, the BMTA Board of Directors approved a proposal for a complete rebuild of our website. The approved proposal involves a list of the general goals of the rebuild, including the technical features we want (and think we can afford!), as well as a detailed menu that outlines the basic structure of folders and pages that will appear on the new site. We have also settled on an existing trail website that has the look and general structure we would like for the BMTA in the future. Take a look at that “model site” [HERE](#). Browse around a bit to get a sense of what we have in mind.

Having agreed on the technical features, the basic look, and the general structure for the rebuilt site, we have one huge challenge left before we can approach a vendor to rebuild the site, namely, ALL THE CONTENT! That is, before we approach a vendor to do the rebuild we must have ALL the written copy, ALL the digital images and ALL other graphics viewers will see on the site. Or at least the vast majority of all three...

Opportunities #3, #4 and #5, then, are the three teams of volunteers, each with different skills, that we need to assemble the content for the rebuilt site.

The Written Copy Team. We can certainly borrow some of our copy from the current site, but even that will need substantial editing because the structure of the rebuild site will be significantly different. Plus, we will need plenty of new copy to fill some of the new pages we have in mind.

The Digital Image Team. Again, we can reuse some of the images from our current site, but many, indeed most, probably don't have the pixel count for the more visually exciting site we want. The Digital Image team will have to identify photographers, detail required specs, invite submissions, and then select images for the new site.

The Site Graphics Team. Maps, both overall and section maps, as well as section elevation profiles are examples of the sort of graphics we will need. Here too the quality will often need to be higher than on our existing site....

The Steering Committee for the website rebuild is **Joy Forehand, Ben Yaun, Rick Harris and myself**. A member of the Steering Committee will likely coordinate each of the teams – though we are certainly open to new additions to do that as well.

Interested in joining one of these teams? Shoot me (Tom Keene) an email at [tkbmta AT gmail DOT com](mailto:tkbmta@gmail.com). We look forward to hearing from you.



A big **THANK YOU** to Ken Cissna (and Artie), Brian Higgins, of Ace Hardware in Blue Ridge, and Ralph Heller for getting the new signs made and finished in time for our Grand Opening at Fall Branch Falls!

Ralph said, “Getting the old signs off the posts was the hardest part”.

Not sure what Artie thought was the hardest part!



URGENT! FINAL CALL!! NOW DUE!! HURRY!!

by George Owen, Chair, 2018 BMTA Annual Meeting Committee

Okay, folks, let's get with it. If you haven't done so by now, you really need to sign up and secure your housing and meals for our big 2018 BMTA Annual Meeting weekend November 2-4 at Coker Creek Village, the campground with cabins and bunkhouses in Southeast Tennessee's Coker Creek Community. Numerous hikes, fun, food, and wonderful fellowship augment our big Saturday night official annual meeting with awards and recognitions, brief reports, election of the 2019 BMTA Board, and topped off with the program by Marci Spencer, renowned Appalachian writer with books on our area national forests and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

So, there are basically two things you need to do right now: 1) Sign up for your housing. Hopefully, most of you will come for the entire weekend, which means securing housing for both Friday and Saturday nights, November 2 and 3 - see list of still available housing below. 2) Sign up for meals at Coker Creek Village - note information on that below. (There is NO registration fee with BMTA itself - we provide hikes and other events free.) Your meal registration, whether all, several, or only one such as Saturday night, is your basic registration with BMTA that you are coming because we receive the updated meal registration list from Coker Creek Village periodically.

HOUSING OPTIONS LEFT:

1) Coker Creek Village itself - There is still plenty of room in the bunkhouses, right in the campground center. Join others there or set up your own family or group. You may have groups of mixed sexes or whatever. Either one or two cabins with bunk beds are still available also. Contact CCV at 423-261-2310 or cokercreekvillage.com for reservations - credit cards accepted. Remember to include your meals (see "Meal Options at CCV" below).

2) Cocobelle Lodge - Admittedly our "fanciest housing" - rooms and baths really nice. Four rooms are now taken, one remains available - hurry! Contact George Owen on this one - he is directly handling the reservations with the owners. It's only a half-mile northwest from CCV.

3) Mountain Creek Hideaway & Grille - A half-mile south of CCV, there are four cabins left there, reasonably priced. Beer and pizza available in the on-site grill. Contact Nadia Dombrowski for info/reservations at 352-563-9824.

4) Cabins at Tellico Plains - Just up TN Hwy. 68 ten-plus miles from CCV, a large number of cabins of various sizes are available through one agency - very nice, many rather new, very clean, and quite reasonable, starting at \$39 plus tax nightly, and up. To rent, contact Mountain View Cabin Rentals - www.tellicologcabins.com - 423-519-2000.

NOTE: *On making reservations at any of the above, be sure to identify yourself as part of "Benton MacKaye Trail Association" in your contact.*

MEAL OPTIONS AT CCV:

Be sure to make your meal reservations at Coker Creek Village for the dining hall. All meals are \$10 each per person, including the meal at the Saturday evening BMTA official annual meeting (let CCV staff know when registering if you have children 12 or under). If you plan to attend the BMTA Annual Meeting Weekend or even just the actual annual meeting night, but are staying somewhere other than Coker Creek Village with reservations for rooming and meal(s), you are still invited to enjoy the Coker Creek Village hearty meals. You may also make arrangements for good, hearty, hike lunches to-go to be made and ready for you around breakfast time. Also, those with special dietary needs should so inform and work out the details with CCV when making meal reservations - regular meals or situational diet meals.

(Note: We are roughly keeping count or registrations by the number of persons registering for meals. **There is no BMTA registration fee as such this year - your meals are our registrations.** If coming, but not eating at all at CCV, please let George Owen know). Please **contact Coker Creek Village at [423-261-2310](tel:423-261-2310)** and make your arrangements and payment now. Identify yourself as part of the BMTA when registering.

ANNUAL MEETING ON SATURDAY NIGHT - BUSINESS AND A GREAT SPEAKER:

Of course, the high and focal point of the whole weekend is our BMTA Annual Meeting and featured speaker. This event first recognizes our volunteers, gives one or more special awards, has a few brief reports on our progress, and the election of our 2019 board. Our featured speaker this year is outstanding and was featured in a major article in an earlier newsletter. She is Marci Spencer, author of two histories on each the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests. She has also written a book on Clingman's Dome in the Smokies as well as a book on that national park for children. She is both widely known in our Southeastern Appalachians as an excellent public speaker on our forests and one who does special programs for children on the outdoors. We hope and believe you will not wish to miss her presentation. Marci is a BMTA member and she and her husband John Spencer will be staying with us for the weekend. (Guests are welcome at the annual meeting.)

HIKES:

Rick Harris is in charge of putting together the schedule of hikes that is now available. There will be hikes you may sign up for and enjoy from Friday through Sunday, November 2, 3, and 4. They range from easy to moderate to more difficult. See the hike list on [page 5](#) and sign up for some good ones!

SPECIAL TRIPS FOR NON-HIKERS:

Rick Harris is also providing some special outings from CCV for non-hikers - scenic vehicular trips to special places in the area. These are especially being established for non-hikers who might be mates, significant others, children, and guests of our hikers. Some of our regular hikers might also prefer these trips. Children and youth under 16 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Look these special trips up on [page 5](#) and consider them, including offering your vehicle for trip use, especially if roomy.

FRIDAY NIGHT SPECIAL EVENTS:

The staff at CCV has offered to arrange a big bonfire for us to gather around, visit, tell stories, play music, etc. on Friday night. So we are planning on that. Also, there may be another special event with that - to be announced!

GUESTS:

Your guests are welcome - we love to have people who are interested in the outdoors, hiking, etc., join us. Just be sure to register them with us through meal registration at CCV or if not eating at all at CCV let George Owen know they are coming (his public land line phone number is 706-897-3366).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS:

Contact George Owen at his email or land line 706-374-4716 or his confidential cell number if you know it. 2018 ANNUAL MEETING COMMITTEE: Darcy Douglas, Debra Guhl, Rick Harris, George Owen

See you there!!

URGENT: Did you reserve a CocoBelle Lodge room months ago for Annual Meeting? If no response recently...

If you thought you had reserved a room at CocoBelle Lodge for the BMTA Annual Meeting in early November, and this occurred about three-four months ago through George Owen, please contact him again. Some of his recently deleted emails apparently had your information - he now does not know who this was - neither does CocoBelle Lodge. [Contact George by phone or email](#). He has assured others signed up for that lodge that their rooms are secure, and done so again in late September.

BMTA Annual Meeting Hikes and Day Road Trips

by Rick Harris

Friday-November 2

- Turtletown Falls (about 4 miles, moderate) - Ken Cissna
- Bald River Falls and Cow Camp Trail - Getting the majority of the waterfalls and a one mile walk along the Tellico River on the road (4 mi round trip, moderate) - Rick Harris
- Sandy Gap to Unicoi Gap on the BMT (8 miles, moderate) – Barry Allen
- Indian Boundary Lake Trail (3.2 mi, easy) + visit to Bald River Falls if time (George Owen) – leaves at 1 PM.

Saturday-November 3

- Unicoi Turnpike Trail and BMT from Unicoi Gap to TN68 (about 7 miles) - George Owen
- Coker Creek Falls Trail from the Falls to the Hiwassee River then up to TN 68 (about 7 miles, moderate) - Rick & Brenda Harris
- Whigg Meadow from Mud Gap on Skyway and back (3.5 miles moderate) – Bob Ruby
- Tellico River Rd to Bald River Road via BMT/Sugar Mountain (about 7 miles) - ???

Sunday-November 4

- Lost Creek Section of BMT (6 miles, easy) – Ken Cissna
- BMT/John Muir Trail from Childers Creek to Towee Creek (4.2 miles) - ???
- BMT/John Muir Trail from Towee Creek to Coker Creek (5.8 miles) - Rick & Brenda Harris
- FS221 on north flank of Big Frog Mountain to Ocoee River, then up Rhododendron Trail to White-water Center (5 miles, easy) – George Owen

Other possible hikes to consider if we can trade out a hike or add a hike:

BMT to Bob Bald from the Skyway - 8 miles, moderate to difficult.

Falls Branch Falls off the Skyway - 2.6 miles, steep downhill for 0.5 miles, then back up.

For the non-hiker road trips:

Friday-November 2

- Short hikes to Bald River Falls, Conasauga Falls and Coker Creek Falls, lunch in Tellico Plains - ???

Saturday-November 3

- Cherohala Skyway Hooper Bald, then to Whigg Meadow, then down North River Road to Fish Hatchery, then out along Tellico River Road and Bald River Falls. Bring lunch with you to eat along the way. - ???
- Cherohala Skyway Visitor Center, Charles Hall Museum, Bald River Falls, lunch at one of the places in Tellico (Tellico KATS, Tellico Grains, Mexican Restaurant, or Tellicafe) - ???

Sunday-November 4

- Ocoee River along US64 from Ocoee #1 dam to Copperhill, with stops at Ocoee #1 dam, kayak/raft take-out and put-in, powerhouse and flume, Ocoee Whitewater Center, and the Burra Burra Mine in Copperhill, lunch in Copperhill.

'Orange' You Safe?

Hunting season is upon us!

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

The season varies, but for firearms it is generally October 20-January 13 in Georgia; November 17- January 6 in Tennessee; November 19 – January 1 in North Carolina. Archery and muzzle loader seasons start earlier. Camping, hiking and other recreational uses are allowed year-round in the National Forests, unless otherwise posted at the WMA check station or at a specific recreation site. All WMA visitors are encouraged to wear hunter orange during the hunting seasons. Hunting is not allowed in the Great Smokey Mountains National Park. You can purchase the BMTA blaze orange cap and shirt from our store at www.bmta.org/Store-Clothing.html.

Click on the following web sites for more detailed information:

Georgia: www.georgiawildlife.com/hunting/regulations

Tennessee: <https://www.tn.gov/twra/hunting/big-game/deer.html>

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



BMTA Nominating Committee for 2019 Officers Working Table

*Nominating Committee Members:
Ken Cissna (chair), Joy Forehand, Debra Guhl, Phil Guhl,
George Owen, Dick Evans, Tom Keene (ex officio)*

Position	2018 Holder	Yrs. In Service	Nominee for 2019
President	Tom Keene	2	Barry Allen
Vice President	George Owen	1	Joy Forehand
Secretary	Joy Forehand	5	Clare Sullivan
Treasurer	Margaret Meadows	1	Margaret Meadows
GA Maintenance	Barry Allen	4	Phil Guhl
TN/NC Maintenance	None	0	John Zardis
Smokies Coordinator	Larry Dumas	1	Larry Dumas
Membership	Darcy Douglas	1	Darcy Douglas
Publicity	Jeff DePaola	1	Jeff DePaola
Conservation	Dave Ricker	1	Dave Ricker
Hiking	Ken Cissna	2	Ken Cissna
Past President	Bob Ruby	2	Tom Keene
State Rep: GA	Bob Cowdrick	1	Appointed by '19 Pres
State Rep: TN/NC	Rick Harris	5	Appointed by '19 Pres
Newsletter Editor	Kathy Williams	N/A (4)	Appointed by the Board

Work Trip Report for September 2018

by Barry Allen with photos courtesy of Mike Kovitch

September's work date was a bit of a diversion from our normal routine. While a portion of our group worked Sections 10a and 10b north and south of the Jacks River Trail intersection, our main effort was devoted to clearing parts of the Jacks River Trail (JRT). The work on the JRT was part of a 'good neighbor' program for the Conasauga Ranger District. After a heavy rain and wind event in late July, most of the trails in the Cohutta Wilderness were closed to hikers. The Forest Service and many trail volunteers have been working to assess and reopen trails, one at a time.

On Saturday, September 8, 22 volunteers gathered at Dally Gap to begin the workday. The first group left Dally, hiking approximately one mile to the BMT intersection on the Jacks River Trail. This group turned right and proceeded north on the BMT, working to complete some brushing left undone from the August work trip. Once this group linked into the August work, they turned around and hiked back to the JRT, crossing and proceeded south on the BMT. Again, the job was to finish removing a few trees and brush left undone from August.



The second group of 15 volunteers left Dally Gap, hiking along the Jacks River Trail for 2.3 miles to the first crossing of the Jacks River. To get tools and gear across the river safely, a human chain was set up from one side of the Jacks to the other. Once each member of the chain had established good footing, tools and packs were passed safely across the river from one volunteer to the next.



Now, please allow me a little digression. For those unfamiliar with the Jacks River, it forms a north/south line through the Cohutta Wilderness. Two years ago, the Jacks River served as the fire break for the Forest Service while fighting the Rough Ridge Fire. Much of the Cohutta Wilderness west of the river was burned, but nothing east of the river. Today, in walking the Jacks River Trail with its many crossings, the astute hiker will notice the dramatic changes from one side to the next.

On the west crossings, much of the brush that burned in 2016 has been replaced with saplings, flowers and grasses. Trees are scarred and quite a few are dead, but the green of new growth has completely hidden the blackened ground left immediately after the fires. In fact, the forest is especially green after the nutrients released by the fires have mixed with the plentiful rains of 2018. The east side of the river is just as you would expect from a wilderness forest. Truly a remarkable night and day hike as you cross the river eighteen times from Dally Gap to the Penitentiary Trail intersection on the Jacks River.

Back to September 8: the first crossing took our work group from the east side of the river to the west side. After volunteers moved crosscut saws, axes and other gear across the Jacks, work began in earnest. Our goal was to clear trail between the first two crossings – just over half a mile of path. Forty feet up the trail from the crossing, we hit the first of many trees for the day.



Four certified sawyers were working – Phil Guhl, Bob Cowdrick, Mike Kovitch and myself. Nobody kept count, but the work was non-stop. At the end of the day, we left three trees uncut between the first and second river crossings -- one was ‘protected’ by yellow-jackets and the other two were ‘protected’ by exhaustion.



It was quite a day. The walk back across the river was welcome after a hot September work day. The hike back to Dally seemed longer than normal. But Sue and Debra had things in hand with BBQ chicken sandwiches and coleslaw. Well done to all!

I hope to see everyone next month as I organize my last work trip as maintenance director and turn over the reins to the next generation.



Overnight on the Cherohala Skyway

by Tom Sewell

Tom Sewell had one hiker, Pat Hill, to join him for two great hikes on the BMT along the Cherohala Skyway. On Friday, August 31, we hiked 6.1 miles from Whigg Meadow to the fish hatchery. This is a trail with 2,000' elevation change which could easily be hiked from the fish hatchery up to the road to Whigg Meadow and return, covering 12.2 miles total. The trail is in beautiful condition and is an old roadbed with a gentle gradient. However, we did the hike one way down which involved a lengthy 23 miles each way shuttle.

We spent the night at the Indian Boundary Campground which is not only beautiful but has hot showers! On Saturday, September 1, we covered the BMT from Mud Gap to Whigg Meadow, a 3.6 mile round-trip and again the trail is in great shape thanks to the BMTA maintenance team. I will have to tell you though that the highlight was at the bald at Whigg Meadow. Each year for the month of September the USGS has a team there that captures song birds, records details, bands the birds and then releases them. The attached photos show Pat Hill hand releasing one of the captured birds. You should put this hike on your calendar for next September. It's a real educational adventure for everyone and the team is eager to see you and let you experience bird banding.



Fall Branch Falls Grand Opening

by The Publicity Committee with photos courtesy of Mike Kovitch

September 22 was the Grand Opening of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association's newly completed rerouted trail to Fall Branch Falls. Fortunately the recent rainy weather held off and it was a beautiful, sunny day as Georgia Maintenance Director, Barry Allen; Jan Hackett, President of the Fannin County Chamber of Commerce; and John Stephens of the Forest Service cut the ribbon to officially open the trail.



Years of foot traffic had taken its toll on the original trail to the falls, eroding much of it into deep crevices and / or leaving trip hazards in the way of large roots and exposed rock. The final decision to create a reroute was made in late 2013 and work began on Valentine's Day, 2015.



Continued next page

Volunteers put in 1,480 man hours battling roots and stumps on a steep hillside. Four-man teams lugged 40 six-by-sixes uphill to be used for cribbing to stabilize the trail in steep areas as well as for the 37 steps connecting the half-mile reroute with the old trail.



BMTA's Grand Opening volunteers greeted well over 360 visitors to the falls and everyone was treated to complimentary morning coffee and donuts and / or a cold iced bottle of water and a hot dog in the afternoon.

Donations received at the event will go to planned projects in the Fall Branch Falls area.



Our thanks go out to the stars of the day: BMTA's volunteers; our partners in the forests, the Blue Ridge Ranger District; the Fannin County Chamber of Commerce as well as to all those who helped from the "sidelines". It is because of these people the event was a big success ... THANK YOU!!!

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Barry Allen | Tom Keene |
| Bob Brown | Mike Kovitch |
| David Blount | Margaret Meadows |
| Shirley Crouch | George Owen |
| Travis Crouch | Joe Page |
| Jeff DePaola | Steve Pruitt |
| Darcy Douglas | Sue Ricker |
| Larry Dumas | Dave Ricker |
| Frank Forehand | Clare Sullivan |
| Debra Guhl | Debbie Tuten |
| Phil Guhl | Kathy Williams |
| Ralph Heller | Ben Yaun |



Historical Connection Between BMTA and the Fall Branch Falls Area

by Joy Forehand

September 22 was the Grand Opening of the Fall Branch Falls Reroute. If you arrived at the trailhead via Aska Road to Stanley Creek Road, just after you entered Gilmer County, you probably noticed a very old, very dilapidated barn on the curve to your left and a deserted house overgrown with weeds on the right. The house was the home of Fire Warden Garfield Stanley and his wife, Frona ... who, by the way, are relatives of BMTA's own Brenda Harris. Garfield is Harris' third cousin twice removed ... as Harris says, "it's a southern thang!"

In its "hay day", the house was marked with an official Forest Service sign identifying Garfield as the Fire Warden and it directed passersby to, "Report Fires Here". You may notice Garfield's name is spelled "Standly" on the sign. Harris said that "Stanley" was spelled "Stadley" in many records prior to 1830 ... and ... according to family legend, the "d" in "Standley" stood for "Damn the King".

At the end of our conversation, Harris shared one, last, rather amusing tidbit ... there is a somewhat curious gravestone at the Stanley Church honoring another colorful character in the Stanley family, Buel Stanley.

The inscription speaks for itself.

*"THE ARM OF BUEL STANLEY
1864 – 1946 AMPUTATED 1915
CAUSED BY FISHING WITH DYNAMITE
IN TOCCOA RIVER BELOW STANLEY
CEMETERY. HIS BODY IS BURIED
AT MACEDONIA CHURCH OF CHRIST
DONATED BY RALPH STANLEY"*



USFS Blue Ridge District Volunteer Appreciation Day

A beautiful sunny day greeted Benton MacKaye Trail Association volunteers at the USFS Blue Ridge District Volunteer Appreciation Day at Vogel State Park. Volunteers from throughout the Blue Ridge Ranger District were warmly greeted at the event, enjoyed delicious pizza ... and ... exceptionally delicious meatballs!

The Blue Ridge District intends to make this an annual event for volunteers in the forest. Future plans include awards recognizing various accomplishments in trail maintenance. The award categories will be announced at a future date.



Blue Ridge Ranger District - District Ranger Andy Baker, Ralph Heller, Dave Ricker, Robert Collins, Tom Keene, USFS Volunteer & Service Program Specialist Beth Britt, Joy Forehand, Frank Forehand, Jim Holland, Debra Guhl and Phil Guhl in back.



The University of Tennessee and USDA Forest Service Partner to Conduct Visitor Use Surveys Throughout Georgia's National Forests

Gainesville, Ga. (September 24, 2018) - The USDA Forest Service in partnership with the University of Tennessee will be conducting a National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) survey across the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests beginning October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019.

Visitors may see more Forest Service and contracted University of Tennessee employees working in developed and dispersed recreation sites and along Forest Service roads. Surveyors will be wearing bright orange vests and be near signs that say "Survey Ahead". Assistance from the public is needed; so please take time to be interviewed. Well trained interviewers want to know about national forest visits. All information provided during the interview is confidential and the survey is voluntary.

The on-going national forest survey has already been conducted once on every national forest in the country. The Forest Service is now returning 5 years later to update the information previously gathered as well as to look at recreation trends over time. The information is useful for forest planning and even local community tourism planning.

It provides national forest managers with an estimate of how many people actually recreate on federal lands and what activities they engage in while there. Other important information needed includes how satisfied people were with their visit and the economic impact of recreation visits on the local economy.

The survey will gather basic visitor information. All responses are totally confidential, in fact a person's name is never written anywhere on the survey. The basic interview lasts about eight minutes.

Sample visitor questions include: where they recreated on the Forest, how many people they traveled with, how long they were on the Forest, what other recreation sites they visited while on the Forest and how satisfied they were with the facilities and services provided. About a third of the visitors will be asked to complete a confidential survey on recreation spending during their trip.

Information collected in the national study will be used in local Forest planning, at the state planning level, and even by Congress. Managers can better provide service when they know visitor needs and satisfactions.

All visitors will need to be represented in the study. It's important for surveyors to talk with local people using the forest as well as out-of-town visitors. Even if you answered the survey questions once already, surveyors would like to talk to visitors about each of their national forest visits. The public's involvement in this study will be greatly appreciated. For additional information about this program you can visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum>.

To receive instant alerts and updates about the forest, follow @ChattOconeeNF on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) or visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/conf>. The Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests is known for providing outdoor recreation opportunities and protecting natural resources. Spanning 26 counties, this national forest is home for a diverse population of wildlife, thousands of miles of clear-running streams and rivers, about 850 miles of recreation trails and dozens of campgrounds and picnic areas. These 867,000 acres are rich in natural scenery, history and culture. The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

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

October

October 3 (Wednesday) Talking Rock Nature Preserve
4 miles, easy.

Contact hike leader Sara Bland at jsbland AT windstream.net

October 6 (Saturday) BMT: Highway 515 to Weaver Creek and return.
5 miles, easy. Mostly dirt roads.

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

October 30 (Tuesday) Big Frog Mtn. via Big Frog Mtn. Trail and BMT trail and return.
11-12 miles total. Moderate to strenuous difficulty; 1300’ elevation change. Uphill first half, downhill last half. Hiking time about 7 hours. Beautiful views along the ridge lines along the way.

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

November

Eleven(!) hikes connected with the Annual Meeting on November 2, 3, and 4 are listed elsewhere in the newsletter.

November 17 (Wednesday) Amadahy Trail at Woodring Branch Park on north shore of Carter’s Lake. 5 miles, easy to moderate.

Contact hike leader Howard Baggett at howardeb AT windstream.net

November 23 (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 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

BMTA to Hike Inn

by Ken Cissna

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.

If you're interested, contact Ken Cissna, BMTA Hike Director, at [kcissna AT usf.edu](mailto:kcissna@usf.edu) for further information and the BMTA reservation code.



The deadline for the November Newsletter is Wednesday, November 7. Thank you!!!