



## Points of Interest

Click the title to go directly to the page.

### President's Column

### Collect BMTA Shirts

### TWO!

### Boling Park

### Upcoming GA Work Trip

### Preservation

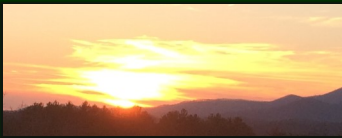
### Dyer, Jacks and Watson

### Skeenah to Watson

### Wagon Train Trail

### Little Frog

### Upcoming Hikes



## BMTA Officers 2018-2019

President:	Barry Allen
Vice President:	Joy Forehand
Secretary:	Clare Sullivan
Treasurer:	Margaret Meadows
GA M/C:	Phil Guhl
TN/NC M/C:	John Zardis
Smokies Coord:	Larry Dumas
Hiking Director:	Ken Cissna
Store:	Ken Cissna
Membership:	Darcy Douglas
Publicity:	Jeff DePaola
Conservation:	Dave Ricker
Past President:	Tom Keene
Newsletter:	Kathy Williams
State Rep GA:	Bob Cowdrick
State Rep TN/NC:	Larry Van Dyke



**BMTA Headquarters**



## President's Column

*‘January brings the snow, makes our feet and fingers glow, February brings the rain, thaws the frozen lakes again’*

Sara Coleridge

As children, many of us read a poem entitled *The Months*, by Sara Coleridge. As I was driving home last Saturday after a rained out Tennessee work day, the phrase “January brings the snow, February brings the rain” popped into my head. I couldn’t quite remember the poem, but a quick Google Search brought up the verse from youth. As Coleridge wrote almost 200 years ago, February certainly HAS brought the rain! As I grow a bit older, I must admit that hiking in a cold winter rain has less and less appeal – both for me and my canine companions. As a matter of fact, last week, I grabbed dogs and leashes on a particularly nasty morning and proceeded to load them in the truck. After driving to a local park, I pulled on my rain-jacket, opened the truck door, and watched as Zeke jumped out of the truck.....and then right back in. *Sometimes dogs are smarter than humans.*

Next week, March 4-8, the USFS has scheduled a rebuild of the viewing platform at DeSoto Falls. Plenty of volunteer opportunities are available to help on the project. Army Rangers from Camp Merrill have been enlisted to run lines, pulleys and baskets across the waterways. Volunteers are needed to help load/unload the basket lines with material for the new platform. It should be an interesting project to view if you have a day or two to help; eight or ten volunteers are needed each day, so please contact Beth Britt at t.beth.britt AT gmail.com or 404-542-4608 if available to help. DeSoto Falls is located about 17 miles south of Blairsville on Hwy 129. I have been assured the work will not be as bad as some of the tasks I have asked of my volunteers -- such as carrying buckets of gravel and 12 foot beams -- but will involve loading and unloading material from the pulley system and helping to assemble the new platform.

Several weeks ago, a few members of the board met Don Davis and Jess Riddle with Georgia Forest Watch (GFW) for breakfast in Blue Ridge, followed by a hike of some lands the BMTA has targeted for a reroute. This reroute will take the longest road walk we have remaining on our trail – Shallowford Bridge to Fall Branch Falls along Stanley Creek Road – and put much of it into a beautiful section of the National Forest adjoining the Rich Mountain Wilderness.

GFW's new revision of *Georgia's Mountain Treasures* highlights some of the areas through which our proposed reroute will one day travel. The board met with Don and Jess to review the protection being recommended for the area to ensure a future reroute would not be impacted. This reroute has long been on our wish list; however, permission to traverse one or two pieces of undeveloped private property has been the hold-up on pushing forward with the project. I wish there were a clear road map to making this road to trail reroute a reality, but the honest truth is that because private property is involved, there is no sure thing. One of the tasks the board has before it this year is to assemble a corridor committee that can look at all of the possibilities involved in the Stanley Creek Road walk, bring in outside advice and help as needed and direct the Association on the best way to proceed. **If you have an interest in serving on the corridor committee and feel you could help navigate the Association through the complex maze of private land ownership, land trusts and the United States Forest Service, PLEASE send me a note.**

And now we travel full circle – “February brings the rain, thaws the frozen lakes again. March brings breezes loud and shrill, stirs the dancing daffodil.” These “breezes loud and shrill” which Sara Coleridge wrote so eloquently of, on top of the February rain, are likely to bring a few problems to the trail. This past Saturday, we had a good showing of 14 volunteers all set to clear 82 trees— of all sizes from a four mile section of trail in Tennessee. The rain made the conditions unsafe to work a chainsaw, so a decision was made to cancel the trip – after everyone had made the drive to Reliance. Of course, the breezes of March are on the way and will surely lead to more down trees. So please join our March work trips if you are able. John and Phil are doing just an absolutely outstanding job as maintenance directors. But as always, they can't do it alone. We will have an especially challenging March, having missed the February trip in Tennessee. The work does not do itself!

One of the big challenges we face as an organization is in developing new leaders, people who can take a team of volunteers on the trail and safely direct them for a day of digging diversions, de-berming or tread work. One maintenance director can't direct three teams engaged in three different tasks on a Saturday work day. We need leaders to manage the groups so that members are productive on the trail. Breaking a large group into teams is the best way to cover as much trail as possible. So answer the call when asked, and use your experience to help lead a team of volunteers. In March, we expect a number of college kids in Georgia on Section 3 and we should be back to Section 12 in Tennessee to remove 82 trees plus the problems from ‘March breezes loud and shrill.’ Hope to see you there.

## Neither Rain Nor Wind-Tennessee Work Trip

by John Zardis

- ◆ **Which Section:** Section 12c
- ◆ **When:** Saturday, March 23
- ◆ **Meeting spot:** Halls Store (intersection of TN30 and Kimsey Hwy, Reliance)
- ◆ **Type of work:** Chainsaw, handsaw, tread work, water diversions
- ◆ **Contact:** John Zardis at [John.Zardis AT migllc.com](mailto:John.Zardis@migllc.com)

**Thank you!**



## **Start Your BMTA T-Shirt Collection**

**All you need is  
30 Hours!**



**Work on the trail  
or at the  
BMTA Festival Tent**



Contact:  
Phil Guhl (GA)  
[bmtaphil@gmail.com](mailto:bmtaphil@gmail.com)  
John Zardis (TN/NC)  
[John.Zardis@migllc.com](mailto:John.Zardis@migllc.com)

## TWO! Georgia February Work Reports

by Phil Guhl with photos courtesy of Mike Kovitch

As a quick review, Georgia has had some challenges...Mother Nature and the Federal Government have not cooperated for a couple of months. Many of our members put those sour grapes aside and responded to the call for help! Is anyone surprised? I, for one, am not. You folks are the best!

I sent out a short notice for help for the first Saturday, February 2. This was a supplemental/catchup trip. Twenty-five VOLUNTEERS SHOWED UP! Wow! We caught up on some badly needed brushing, blazing, logging and scouting. Depending on the team the individual worked with, he or she either had a relatively easy day or a fairly strenuous one. Whichever it was, everyone was extremely productive and knocked out their objectives with a fervor. I want to personally thank each and every one of you for your contribution to maintaining the trail we love. Your efforts not only preserve the Benton MacKaye Trail, but they make the trail more user friendly and safer for hikers.

We had five teams! This is rare; however, not unusual. This supplemental maintenance trip had 25 volunteers roll out of bed and head into the woods to work for the benefit of others. This was not a regularly scheduled work trip and yet, we still had a huge participation! Thank you!

**Team One** (Sections 9a, 9b) - Tree clearing and brushing: Barry Allen (Lead), Dave Ricker, Sue Ricker, Bob Nelson, Christopher Fraker, Andy Meeks, David Lankford and Janice Lankford.

**Team Two** (Section 8a) - Tree clearing and brushing: Mark Yost (Lead), Mike Kovitch, Hank Baudet, Ken Cissna, Steve Pruett, John Franetic and Rob Herman.

**Team Three** (Section 8b+) - Tree clearing and brushing: Ed Sullivan (Lead), Clare Sullivan, Frank Forehand, Joel Lee and Phil Guhl.

**Team Four** (Section 5d) - Blazing: Darcy Douglas (Lead), Janie Hitchcock and Debra Guhl.

**Team Five** (Section 8b, 8c, 8d, 8e) - Scouting and real time trail status reports: Steve Bayliss (Lead) and Ben Yaun.

Again, thank you!



Continued next page



Just one week later, on February 9, our regularly scheduled Georgia Work Trip took place (mark your calendars for the rest of the year...the Georgia Work Trip is on the *second* Saturday of *every* month).

The numbers are in! This was an effective day with yet another very energetic and motivated crew. By my count...we dug 19 new water diversions, cleaned 17 water diversions, logged out 21 trees and lopped close to four miles of trail.

All I can say is AWESOME! Great team, great folks, and great food! I am just sad that Barry and Larry missed the steak, lobster, and champagne. Thank you Patrick and Cindy Ward and Thrivent Financial for Shane's Taco Soup, quesadillas, and beverages. Their partnership has made a difference.

Teams were:

**Team One** (Logging out Section 2b): Bob Cowdrick (Leader), Dave Ricker, Sue Ricker, Janie Hitchcock, Brian Trinkle and Shane Morrison.

**Team Two** (Water Diversions on Section 2a): Phil Guhl (Leader), Debra Guhl, Butch Watson, Hank Baudet, Mike Kovitch, Ed Sullivan, Bob Nelson, Patrick Ward, Cindy Ward, Dale Clark, Frank Forehand, Steve Bayliss, David Lankford, Janice Lankford, Ken Cissna and Gary Hitchcock.

**Team Three** (Logging out Section 8c): Barry Allen (Leader) and Larry Dumas.



**I can't thank everyone enough for their hard work.**



Many folks may want to serve by helping to maintain the Benton MacKaye Trail. There are challenging and strenuous tasks, as well as many easier opportunities to support the overall effort. We need more of both of these types of volunteers. Do me a favor and pass the word about our other opportunities to participate. For example: there are times, like this work trip on February 9, that come up more often than not where we need help with moving crews around. There are other ways to help, as well. Case in point...Gary Hitchcock shuttled workers to Bryson Gap. This saved several hours of non-productive time by getting folks put in the right place at the right time.

Saturday would have easily been two to three hours longer for several people if it had not been for his willingness to help out in this capacity. Likewise, last month Gary worked with a team building benches for the trail. Again, he had the right tools, the sharp tools, and a willingness to help build the benches which resulted in the construction being completed in record time. If you know someone like Gary Hitchcock...pass the word. We need those folks!



## Work Trips, An Overview

For those who may not be familiar with BMTA's trail maintenance set up or might know someone who could help, here are some of the highlights ... We usually go out as a team on the second Saturday of every month in Georgia. In Tennessee, we go out on the fourth Saturday of every month (except November and December...typically the third Saturday due to the holidays). The only reasons we would cancel or reschedule is 1) the weather...when safety is at risk, and 2) when the federal government is shut down. Also affecting cancellations are whether or not we have an opportunity to work on private lands or to hike in order to scout trail conditions for future trips. When we work in a National Forest, the US Forest Service views volunteer organizations, such as the BMTA, a non-essential, non-compensated employee; thus we have to work to the US Forest Service standards/requirements and are covered by their workman's comp insurance. Membership dues help to cover the cost of tool replacement, construction materials, training and other conservation efforts on the Benton MacKaye Trail.

The Benton MacKaye Trail Association provides helmets and tools. Due to the number of folks attending there can also be carpooling opportunities. In Georgia, we commonly meet at a local restaurant for a quick breakfast and some socializing before heading to the trail. In Tennessee, due to the remoteness of many of the sections, folks regularly meet at the trailhead or at a landmark to carpool in. Volunteers should bring a daypack, a minimum of two liters of water, a lunch/snacks, gloves and hiking boots (mid-height are fine). The work starts between 9-9:30 AM and usually runs to 3-5 PM, depending on the planned work, the number of volunteers and conditions. We will start with a Job Hazard Analysis (what needs to be done and any issue to be alerted to) and a Safety Debriefing. Teams are assigned and sent down the trail.

### Two other opportunities to contribute are:

- 1) Occasional, and sometimes, impromptu maintenance trips during the week or "off weekends".
- 2) To help on the blazing team that is led by Darcy Douglas.

Additionally, if you have an interest in adopting a section of the trail and being personally responsible for much of that section's maintenance, we require a few things:

- 1) The volunteer should be a member in good standing.
- 2) The member has to attend a minimum of two work trips...the actual number of trips is determined by the maintenance director to ensure the maintainer is fully versed in safety and maintenance techniques.
- 3) Once a section is determined, the maintenance director and volunteer will walk that section together identifying the maintenance needs and review any concerns. We have several sections available for adoption.

Should you have any further questions that I didn't cover, please let me (for Georgia), John Zardis (for Tennessee/North Carolina), and/or Darcy Douglas (for blazing) know. We'd be happy to answer them. We want folks to have a fun, productive, and safe time.

Please join us in the coming months....

Saturday, March 9, 2019: Working Section 3 between Little Skeenah Creek and Skeenah Gap Road.  
Saturday, April 13, 2019; Working Section 4 between Skeenah Gap Road and Payne Gap...possibly to Wilscot Gap.

## Come One Come All! Get Some Glee!

by Darcy Douglas

If you haven't received an email from me in the last five months expressing glee that you renewed your dues, you probably haven't done so. All of us on the Board sincerely hope you will remain with the organization!

There is room for all: the trail workers, the blazers, the writers, the section maintainers, the publicity and conservation folks, those who enjoy making phone calls and reaching out to others, those willing to work with our databases and our website, people who will take time to work our booths at festivals and other events, and those who offer their financial donations for the growth of the organization and trail. Come one, come all!!!

As promised, the Corporate members, who pay a higher rate for membership than regular folks, are listed in the newsletter from time to time. These Corporate Level Members have already renewed for 2019. Please note these members and offer them your business as you can!!



Blue Jeans Pizza and Pasta Factory  
Blue Ridge, Georgia



Starr Mountain Outfitters  
Etowah, Tennessee



## Boling Park and Etowah Trails

by Clayton Webster with photos courtesy of Suzy Dowling

On January 22, 2019, a sunny but frigid day, 17 Benton MacKaye Trail Association hikers enjoyed a 4.5 hike on the Boling Park trail complex at the Etowah Trail & Sutallee Trace Greenspace corridor in Cherokee County. We were led by Howard Baggett and Dan Owen, who were both celebrating their birthdays.

Dan Owen, as leader of Boy Scout Troop 241, has been instrumental in the establishing, building, and maintaining the wonderful trail system on this land that borders the swift flowing Etowah River. Howard helps Dan with the trail maintenance on an almost weekly basis. The land is owned by the U.S. Corps of Engineers and the Cherokee County Water and Sewer Authority. The DNR manages the Corps' lands as a Wildlife Management Area.



The temperature was 33 degrees when we started the hike, and even though we were dressed in layers, not many were shed because it did not hit 40 degrees during the hike. Our hike was what is called a lollipop loop, as we began and ended on a stem that became a counter clockwise loop over three different trails; the White Trail, the Yellow Trail, the Purple Trail, and back to the White Trail to finish up. We had to shorten the hike a little bit and revise our planned route due to a lot of logging activity.

The White Trail by the river was at first an Indian trading route, then a main road when the white settlers moved in. During this time, the river changed its course and eroded much of the road. A huge rock cliff kept them from widening the road. The farming community had to build a bypass road straight up the ridge to get around the cliff. That road has now become the Yellow Trail.



Dan Owen, standing by the high level Etowah River, told us a little about the history of this area going back to the Cherokee Indians, and even beyond that. Not too far downstream, the river runs into Lake Allatoona.

In the many cliffs that bordered the trail along the river, we found some old carvings that dated back into the 1880s. We were dismayed to see a lot of paint sprayed graffiti that had happened since we were last here. The trail along the river had a lot of invasive plants like privet and elaeagnus.

The rest of our hike was primarily through an invasive plant-free hardwood forest, although the Purple Trail had some nice pine forested areas. We all noticed the abundance of big leaf magnolia leaves on the ground. They were so thick in some areas that it looked like litter. In other areas it looked like boulders scattered around. We also saw a large number of Christmas ferns on just about every trail we were on.



Hike leader Howard Baggett (right) with Dan Owen. Dan told us that this was the foundation for a bridge to cross the deep creek back in the early days. This was first used for wagons and then for vehicles. Below this bridge support was a place in the stream where there was a rock that Dan told us the Indians had used to grind corn.

As we hiked along the White Trail bordering the river, we were headed to the Frank Stone Memorial Bridge over Pucket Creek. This is a very elevated and elaborate bridge that was built to replace previous ones that were always getting washed away in floods. Too bad this bridge was built before YouTube. Based on Dan's description, it was a very interesting operation to get the bridge built without giant cranes.

Some of the tactics involved tying ropes to the huge telephone pole logs and floating them downstream with a canoe. Then they climbed giant trees and set up a winch system to pull the logs up into place.

Once the bridge was built, it stood high above the ground level. This was necessary as the high level floods now come just below the bridge crossing. At the time, Dan was teaching the shop classes at the nearby high school. He had the shop classes build the stairways and ramps on each side up to the bridge. The bridge is now over 20 years old and is beginning to show some signs of wear and tear.



Suzy Downing managed to get everyone else in her picture of our group on the marvelous Frank Stone Memorial Bridge over Pucket Creek. Note the size of the massive timber that supports the bridge crossing as well as the telephone pole-sized upper supports that were all pretty much manually put into place.

Dan said that the bridge was built at the request of the county because Boling Park was being established. They were going to have a parking lot and wanted the trail to cross Pucket Creek. The original plan for the trail system Dan was working on did not include crossing the creek because it looked like an impossible job.



As we hiked through the woods, Tom Sewell spotted a Mylar birthday balloon, so we had our two leaders pose with the balloon while we sang "Happy Birthday" to them. Howard still has his hat on from the great surprise party his family threw for him over the weekend.



*Save the Dates!*  
**November 1-3, 2019**  
**BMTA Annual Meeting**  
**Fontana Village - North Carolina**

For reservations call (828) 498-2211.  
To receive your discount -  
**Mention the Benton MacKaye Trail Association!**

# GEORGIA WORK TRIP ANNOUNCEMENT

by Phil Guhl Maintenance Director

- ◆ **Work site:** Section 3.
- ◆ **When:** Saturday, March 9, 2019.
- ◆ **Meet:** 8:00 at the Village Restaurant (4131 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Blue Ridge, GA 30513) or 9:00 at Section 3a trailhead at Little Skeenah Creek on Highway 60.
- ◆ **Plan for the Day:** Erosion Control plus a little.
- ◆ **What to bring:** minimum 2 liters of water, long pants, boots, gloves, and snack.
- ◆ **Contact:** Phil Guhl at pguhl AT guhlspace.com or 770-548-5590 (Please RSVP so we can plan on the number of tools, helmets, and food afterwards!)

My plan for the day is to have up to five teams:

**Team One** (LEAD: Phil Guhl): Water Diversions (cleaning and installing) on Wallalah Mountain.

**Team Two** (LEAD: TBD): Water Diversions (cleaning and installing) on Rhodes Mountain.

**Team Three** (LEAD: Debra Guhl): Food/drink afterwards.

---- with enough volunteers...we will have a Team Four and a Team Five.

**Team Four** (LEAD: TBD): Step rebuild at first switchback on Rhodes Mountain.

**Team Five** (LEAD: TBD): Improve the rock walkway at the seeps on Wallalah Mountain.

This is the *second Saturday of the month!* That's right! Our regularly scheduled maintenance trip. I would like to improve the erosion control to sustain the trail; however, with enough volunteers we can attack a couple of other needs on Wallalah and Rhodes Mountains.

**Phil Guhl**

**Phone: 770-548-5590**

**pguhl AT guhlspace.com**

**Benton MacKaye Trail Association**

**[www.bmta.org](http://www.bmta.org)**

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

## Amazon Smile Benefits BMTA

If you are going to make purchases from Amazon please use this address: BMTA's unique link is <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/58-1428009>. If you do so, Amazon will direct a small share of your purchases to BMTA. A convenient way to do this is to click on the link and then bookmark that page on your toolbar or wherever you keep hiking links.

**THANK YOU!!!**

## Letter to the Editor-Thank you to Tom Keene

by Neill Herring

I did want to submit a letter to the editor of the newsletter of the association to express my appreciation for the review of the biography of Benton MacKaye a couple of issues back. As a result of walking sections of the trail, I decided to read up on MacKaye and found the biography by Larry Anderson that was reviewed.

After reading the book I revisited portions of it later in trying to find a “quotation” that was not in it, but one that was so strongly implied that I believed it to be there. The phrase I falsely recalled was “skyline wilderness,” but the term is not in the text, but the idea of such a place is strongly put across there. I did learn that there is a “Skyline Wilderness Area” in the West, but the concept that MacKaye sought to realize was discussed in the biography in connection with the Skyline Drive, a name that may very well have been lifted from his work on the topic of an east coast wilderness along the Appalachian Trail that he had conceived soon after WWI.

The idea of the “skyline wilderness” is a captivating simple expression of its concept, a place along a major ridge that is left deliberately undeveloped save for trails and camps. My friend Sally Bethea and I have tried to hike along sections of the BMT in GA over the last couple of years, and we wanted to complete the “gap” we had missed on the section that starts at the junction and parting of the BMT with the AT, and GA 60 north of the Swinging Bridge. We had postponed that segment because it didn’t offer a place we thought we could leave a car halfway, so this past fall we decided to undertake the whole segment at once.



It was a long and tiring walk, but among its highlights was the segment atop Wildcat Ridge, where, for over a mile we could look through the leafless oak-hickory forest and see only forested mountains on either side, realizing the very image of the skyline wilderness MacKaye envisioned for the AT.

Thoreau’s idea that “in wilderness is the preservation of the world” is a great comfort, particularly during this time we are learning to call the Anthropocene, but it is a concept that needs to be revived in a place of wildness itself.

We found it on Wildcat Ridge.

Wildcat Ridge “the preservation of the world”

## Dyer Gap, Jacks River South Fork and Watson Gap

by Tom Sewell

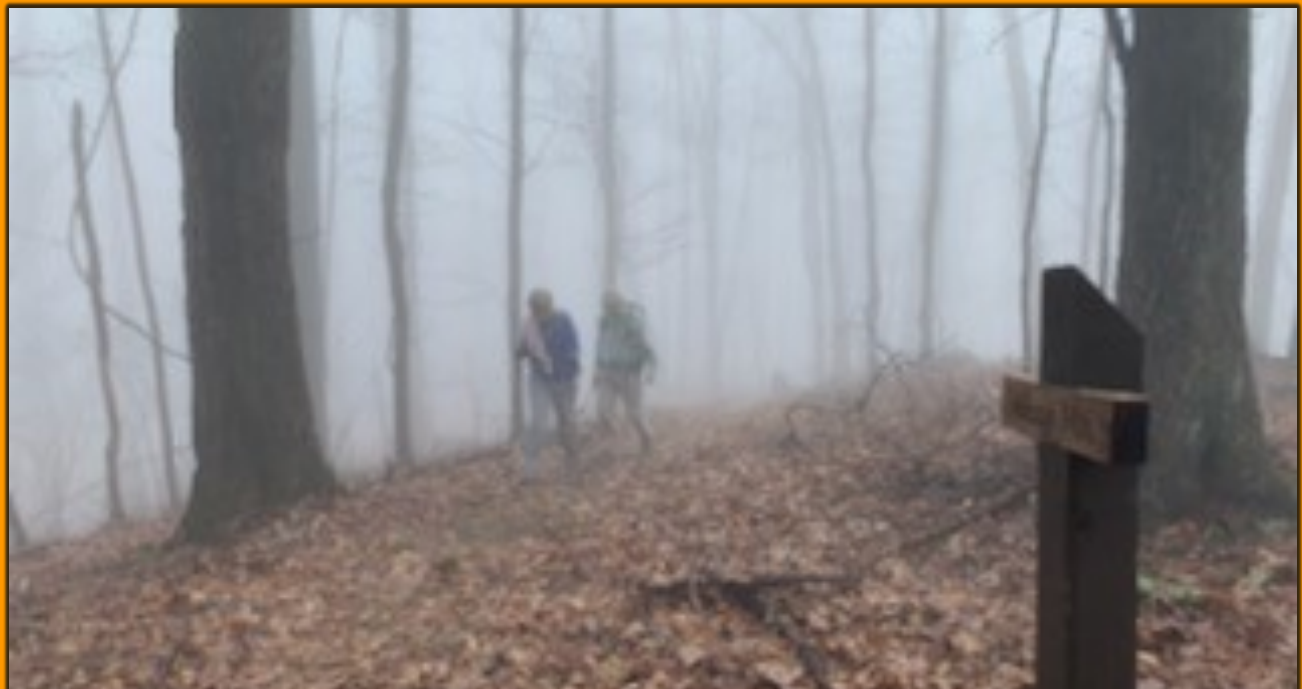
On Friday, February 15, Tom Sewell led six hikers on a hike in the Cohuttas from Dyer Gap down to the South Fork of the Jacks River and back up to Watson Gap. We were in luck to have some sunshine as February seems to be one rainy day after another. We had a few minor blow downs to clear, but fortunately the previous weekend the enormous blow down near the intersection of the BMTA and the Pinhoti Trail had been cleared by the BMTA maintenance team. Thank you! We took the side trips to the Upper Shadow Falls and Pinhoti Trail to the Jacks River crossing, which was, as expected, knee deep, and we were glad we didn't need to cross it today. Hikers included Tom Sewell, Carolyn Sewell, GiGi Robichaud, Fritz Gilbert, Evelin Yarns and Doug Yarns.



## Hike on Section 4: Skeenah Gap to Wilscot Gap

by Ginny Smith

We had a foggy but rain-free 4.6 mile hike on Section 4 of the BMT. About 0.6 of a mile from our end point we met a fun, young, "meet up" hiking group from the Atlanta area looking for the "the tower." We turned them around, and we hiked back to our cars and sent them across the street. Another hiker was just starting out for the tower, also in the wrong direction, so she joined the others in search of the tower. They were all impressed as to how OLD we were and out hiking--one young man said his dad was our age at home sitting on the couch. Fun day not to be on the couch!





## Hike on Wagon Train Trail from Brasstown Bald

by Ken Cissna

Georgia Forest Watch (GFW) and the BMTA cooperated in sponsoring a hike for the third consecutive year. Sue Harmon, president of GFW, and Ken Cissna, led the jointly sponsored hike on the Wagon Train Trail. Although the trail runs from Brasstown Bald to the Sharp Methodist Church parking lot in Young Harris, this year we went about a third of the way down—to the second overlook where we had lunch to go with the outstanding view—and then back. We had 23 hikers so we split into two groups due to most of the trail being in the Brasstown Wilderness. Some of the group also walked up to the observation tower, so the hike involved four or five miles. The weather was chilly but warming so the icicles hanging from and on the rocks were dripping as we walked, and the trail was a little wet and slippery. As the GFW permits dogs on its hike, we had four very well-behaved trail dogs in addition to the 23 hikers. BMTA members were slightly outnumbered by GFW members, but only slightly, with the co-leaders members of both organizations along with a handful of other joint members.



All smiles and ready to go! What are you humans waiting for?!  
Photo courtesy of Sue Harmon.



**Largest of the numerous blow downs we had to navigate.**

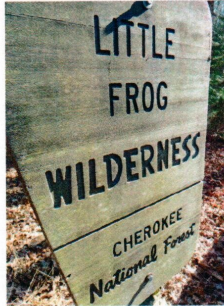


**Wall of icy beauty.**

## Little Frog Wilderness Addition

### 978 acres, Polk County, Tennessee

#### Description



Little Frog Wilderness is a companion to Big Frog Wilderness across the spectacular Ocoee River Gorge, site of the 1996 Olympic Whitewater events and current home of the Ocoee Whitewater Center. The two small additions totaling 978 acres, both recommended for wilderness by the U.S. Forest Service, give more logical boundaries to this important recreation area on the doorstep of the Whitewater Center.

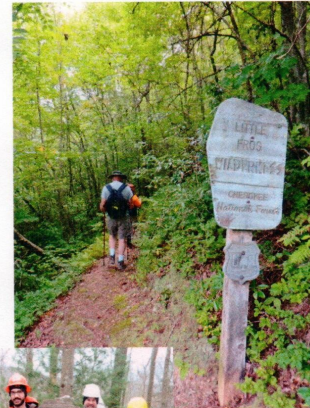
The Little Frog area is popular for a wide variety of recreation activities, including hunting, fishing, hiking, bird watching, photography, and nature study. The wilderness addition incorporates the Benton MacKaye Trail, an important and popular hiking trail that unites the Big Frog and Little Frog Wilderness areas. Volunteer organizations provide regular stewardship and trail maintenance.

Wilderness designation for these two parcels will help to preserve the primitive character of the area, and to protect the 300+ mile long Benton MacKaye Trail from encroachment.

Wilderness designation will also help protect critical wildlife habitat for a variety of species including Black Bear, Bobcat, White-tailed Deer and Grey Fox. Plus, the area is part of the Southern Blue Ridge Important Bird Area - migratory, breeding and wintering habitat for numerous bird species.

#### Location

The Little Frog Wilderness lies just north of US 64. The Little Frog NE addition is 348 acres and the Little Frog NW addition is 630 acres. These areas are both easily accessed using FDR 68 (Kimsey Highway).



**Tennessee Wild** is a coalition of organizations dedicated to protecting wilderness on the Cherokee National Forest for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. Please visit [tnwild.org](http://tnwild.org) for more information.

<http://www.tnwild.org/campaigns/#>

<https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/local/story/2018/dec/13/just-passed-farm-bill-includes-protecti20000/484860/>

<https://www.southernenvironment.org/news-and-press/news-feed/tennessee-wilderness-act-will-protect-20000-acres-of-cherokee-national-fore>

## 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 in that late winter–early spring hiking season –cool, crisp weather, great views. More hikes will be forthcoming, so check the Activities Calendar of the website and next month’s newsletter for updates. Enjoy.

### March

**March 15** (Friday) BMT along Sisson Creek: Five Bridges to Indian Rock.  
4 miles; easy plus (some hills); approximately two hours on the trail.

This leisurely, up-and-back, morning hike will follow the BMT along Sisson Creek upstream as far as Indian Rock, crossing the stream five times each way. Besides the bridges, we will enjoy views of three mountain lakes and several cascades. It should be sweet. Following the hike those who wish can join us at Blue Jeans Pizza in Blue Ridge for a recovery beverage, conversation, and good food.

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

**March 21** (Thursday) Three Forks to Hickory Flats Cemetery on the AT to No Name Bald via FS roads to Long Creek Falls via the BMT to Three Forks.  
8 miles, moderate.

Contact hike leader Mike Pilvinsky at mikepilvinsky AT hotmail.com

**March 25** (Monday) BMT in Cohuttas: From Dally Gap to the remains of the old fire tower and back.  
About 8 miles, moderate. Hiking uphill first half and downhill second. About 1000 feet elevation change each way.

Contact hike leader Tom Sewell at SewellTom AT yahoo.com or text to 706-669-6406

### April

**April 8** (Monday) Cartecay Loop Trail.  
A fairly easy 4 mile loop trail, much of it along the Cartecay River.

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

**April 15 (Monday) BMT near Cherohala and Tellico Plains, TN:** From Unicoi Overlook/Beech Gap parking (elevation 4,400') to Whigg Meadow (elevation 4,940'). 5.8 miles, moderate difficulty. We will place a shuttle car at Mud Gap to shorten the return from Whigg Meadow.

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



**The deadline for the April Newsletter is Wednesday, May 1.  
Thank you!**