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Vice President:	Joy Forehand
Secretary:	Clare Sullivan
Treasurer:	Margaret Meadows
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TN/NC M/C:	Dick Evans
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BMTA Headquarters



Benton MacKaye Trail Association

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President's Column

'I am prepared for the worst, but hope for the best.' Benjamin Disraeli

Cicero, George Washington, Benjamin Disraeli and many others have been quoted in various texts, expounding on the 'prepared for the worst' idea. Last month members and friends of the BMTA helped us do just that: prepare for the worst. Within one day of publishing an appeal for donations to purchase trauma kits for our sawyers, we had enough pledges to cover 10 trauma kits – my minimum goal. Within three days, all 15 kits that I had hoped to fund were pledged, and in three weeks just over \$2,000 was pledged for this critical need. I exchanged notes with one member who very wisely said "I hope you will never need them." Amen! As Disraeli wrote well before his political days and service as British Prime Minister, 'I am prepared for the worst but hope for the best'. These trauma kits will help the BMTA prepare for the worst. At the same time, I am confident that our sawyers are the safest out there.

As I shared with several folks who made pledges, funds collected over and above those needed to purchase 15 trauma kits would be spent to cover needs with the same theme -- trailside emergency. The new trauma kits will go to all of our active sawyers, with a few extra kits purchased for members who hope to be chainsaw certified in the coming months. In addition, all of our *work* crew leaders will receive new first aid kits as needed, as will at least eight of our hike leaders. These first aid kits are not as expensive as trauma kits but are indispensable when a need arises. Just ask Clare and Ed Sullivan who treated a couple of young scouts this past weekend after an encounter with yellow jackets. (This troop of Boy Scouts did a bang up job of brushing out Section 13 near the Hiwassee River, but as many members have learned over the years, September is prime yellow jacket time.) Rest assured that we will spend your dollars wisely.

After a few delays, work should begin in October for parking at Big Stamp Gap. The BMTA is partnering with the Forest Service in a cost share agreement to fund this improvement for the trail. Located about a mile and a half from the Appalachian Trail parking for Springer Mountain on FS 42, Big Stamp Gap will provide parking for day hikers, overnight hikers and backpackers who expect to be on the trail for up to two weeks. We will have parking for approximately 14 vehicles, with a kiosk and short side trail attaching to the BMT. The USFS has funded initial surveys and NEPA studies and will handle grading and tree removal on the site.

Continued next page

The BMTA will fund gravel for the parking area, parking stops, kiosk and a perimeter barrier/fence to keep vehicles in the parking area and out of the woods. We will schedule an upcoming work trip in November or December to take care of work to complete the improvements. BY THE WAY, we are having a raffle at the Annual Meeting this year to fund Big Stamp Gap parking. So please come prepared to buy a few tickets!

Don't forget to join us for the Benton MacKaye Trail Association's Annual Meeting at Fontana Village on first weekend in November. I hope to see you there. And bring a little cash with you this year: cash bar on Friday night! We'll also be selling raffle tickets and store items throughout the weekend, so don't forget the checkbook. Theme for the weekend – **ENJOY YOURSELF!**

Annual Meeting Featured Speaker, Sarah Thompson



Sarah Thompson is the executive director of the Southwestern NC Planning and Economic Development Commission based in Sylva. In this role she serves the seven southwestern counties of North Carolina and the 17 municipalities within by administering programs related to aging, workforce development, transportation planning, and community and economic development. Through this role she also administers the Mountain West Partnership, the southwestern region's economic development partnership of education, business development and local government entities.

Sarah was previously the executive director of the Downtown Sylva Association and remains a strong supporter of downtown revitalization efforts in the region. She served two years as the chair of the Jackson County Planning Board and one term on the Sylva Town Board. She is currently a member of the board of directors of the NC Rural Economic Development Center and the Dogwood Health Trust, and is the chair of Thread Capital, a newly formed CDFI under the Rural Center that connects primarily rural and minority owned small businesses with funding and coaching. Sarah has a BA from Miami University in Oxford, OH and an MPA from Western Carolina University. She lives in downtown Sylva with her three daughters.

BMTA Annual Meeting Dinner

Saturday, November 2, 2019

Fontana Village - North Carolina

**Payment for dinner reservations must be
Received by October 17!**



Use this link to make your reservations

<http://www.bmta.org/AnnualMeeting-2019.php>

Nominating Committee Report

by Dick Evans

The Nominating Committee for the 2019 Annual Meeting and Election was appointed by President Barry Allen. The committee consisted of Dick Evans, Chair, Clare Sullivan, Debra Guhl, Phil Guhl and Barry Allen, Ex Officio. The committee did not physically meet but conducted all its business through electronic means. The Nominating Committee is very pleased to present the slate of candidates below. All listed have agreed to run and to serve if elected to the indicated position.

President - Barry Allen

Vice President - Joy Forehand

Secretary - Clare Sullivan

Treasurer - Margaret Meadows

Georgia Maintenance Director - Phil Guhl

Tennessee/North Carolina Maintenance Director - Richard Harris

Smokies Coordinator - Larry Dumas

Publicity Director - Jeff DePaola

Conservation Director - Dave Ricker

Hiking Director - Ken Cissna

Membership Director - No Nominee selected.

Further nominations will be accepted from the floor at the election on November 2nd at Fontana Village.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME!!!!

by Darcy Douglas

Once again, we are asking for Membership Renewals! To Join or Renew Online using a Credit Card, Debit Card or your PayPal Account, use this [link](#). To Join or Renew using a personal check: use this [form](#), print it, fill out and mail in with your check to the address given on the form.

We are on a CALENDAR YEAR Schedule, but if you renew NOW, you will be a member until the end of 2020.

Your membership dollars really add to the organization, especially our trail building and maintaining activities. If you join at the Corporate level, your company name will appear in the newsletter at least three times throughout the year. If you join as a Life Member, you never have to give dues a thought again! And, a Benton MacKaye Trail Association membership is the perfect gift for any occasion!

Remember we are a 501c3 organization, so this is a tax-deductible expense!

Join or renew your membership now and work side by side with other BMTA volunteers to make the Benton MacKaye Trail THE preeminent mid-distance trail in the nation!

Annual Meeting Raffle

All proceeds will be used to complete the
Big Stamp Gap Parking.
Estimated cost is \$3,500.

Unicoi Lodge
2 Nite Stay

**Star Mountain
Outfitters**
Hiking Package

Six Moon Designs
Tent & Accessories

Poole's Bar-B-Q
Gift Certificate

Blue Jeans
Gift Certificate

Whitewater Center
T-Shirt

Fontana Village
2 Nite Stay

Hike Inn
1 Nite Stay

REI
8 Backpacks

Thru
Autographed Copy
by Richard Judy

Pink Pig
Gift Basket

Tickets Are
— \$10.00 —
Available
at the
Annual Meeting



Do your Christmas Shopping Early!
And, help BMTA complete the Big Stamp Gap Parking.

Raffle Drawing — Saturday, November 2, 2019

Fontana Village - North Carolina

Dahlonge Trail Fest

by Ben Yaun with photos courtesy of Mike Kovitch

The Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA) joined thousands of outdoor enthusiasts of all ages at the Ninth Annual Dahlonge Trail Fest held September 7 – 8, 2019, at Hancock Park in downtown Dahlonge, Georgia.

With exhibits on hiking, biking, camping, horseback riding, canoeing and rock climbing as well as a wide variety of workshops, guest speakers and demonstrations, the Trail Fest had something for everyone.

BMTA volunteers were on hand to provide information and answer questions about hike schedules, trail maps and work trips. Front and center in all of these exchanges were BMTA's primary objectives of preserving, protecting and defending the BMT "... *leaving a footpath for generations to follow*".

BMTA garnered an overall total of 94 signatures from attendees interested in: Hiking - 70 / Trail Maintenance - 44 / and Membership - 30.

The BIG crowd pleaser at the BMTA display area was an opportunity for attendees to participate in cutting logs with an "old school" two-man crosscut saw.

The inter-active event allowed participants, young and old, tall and short, to really get a feel for what it was like cutting logs before chainsaws.

We couldn't have done this without our much-appreciated volunteers. A big thank you to: Our cross-cut teams of Bob Cowdrick, Dave Ricker, Barry Allen and Robert Edmondson. Our booth staff of Joanie Baker, Bob Brown, Jeff DePaola, Frank Forehand, Tom Keene, Doug Kleiber, Mike Kovitch, Margaret Meadows, Jan Pryor, Sue Ricker, Cindy Tehan, Debbie Tuten, Kathy Williams and Ben Yaun.



The Second Saturday Curse

by Phil Guhl

I am sure you were just as disappointed as I was that the heavens refused to open up to dump its watery excesses upon our heads as we worked...NOT! Yes! Has the second Saturday curse been broken? Could it be possible that we may be able to work while staying dry going forward? Stay tuned for these and other exciting answers!

That's right! It did not rain. The forecast said it would. The sky looked like it would. There were even thunderclaps overhead, but it did not rain...

There is only one thing that surprises me and impresses me more than this weather related non-event...your dedication and work ethic. From me and the rest of the BMTA board: THANK YOU!

Most of us met at the Village Restaurant in Blue Ridge for a bite to eat and some socializing and then we packed up at 8:30 to head for the trail. We split into two groups as we left the restaurant, which caused a little confusion. A smaller team headed out towards Highway 60 to Wallalah/Licklog Mountains and the larger group headed to Dally Gap. Some of the Dally Gap team, out of habit for the past five years, followed Barry Allen out of the parking lot. They soon realized the error in their ways and were put on the right path to Dally. We got to our respective meet up spots, had our Safety Debrief to discuss the anticipated hazards, tool safety and work scope for the day. After that...we set off to work some trail.

Team Wanderers was headed up by Frank Forehand. They headed west out of Dally on the Jacks River Trail (JRT) to the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT) intersection. They worked up to the Hemp Top Trail at Spanish Oak Gap and then hiked back to Dally. Slingblades and loppers were the weapon of the day. All of the BMT got cleared except for the last .2 miles. Team members were Steve Pruett, Rob Herman, Bob "Yellow Jacket Bait" Nelson and George Owen.

Team Noodle Makers took the same path, but with a Certified Crosscut sawyer at the helm, Ed Sullivan. Seven trees were dispatched from the trail at the hands of this crew. Team members included Debra Guhl, David Lankford and Janice Lankford.

Team Alpine Loggers with Barry "The Machine" Allen in the lead crested Wallalah Mountain and cleared the trail of 11 respectable trees from Highway 60 over Wallalah and the saddle to Licklog Mountain. A couple of these trees had also substantially damaged the trail tread, thus the team threw some serious dirt to get the trail back in shape for hikers. Team members were Shane Morrison, Andy Meeks and Mark Yost.

Team Brush Beaters, headed up by yours truly, worked from Spanish Oak Gap towards the Penitentiary Branch Trail intersection. Much of this trail was only a few inches wide with growth over four feet tall on either side. We didn't make it all of the way, but what was gotten was gotten well. Team members were Ann Redman (guest - in town from Texas), Clare Sullivan, Dale Clark and Shelton Crow.

After the work was done around 2:00 PM, we commenced to devour a great spread of pulled-pork sandwiches, cole slaw, deviled eggs, watermelon and beverages. Special thanks to Debra Guhl and Janice Lankford.

Annual Bird Survey and Banding Event

by Tom Sewell

Eight adventurous hikers met up at the Unicoi Crest parking lot at the Tennessee/North Carolina line on the Cherokee Parkway for a 4.25 mile hike to visit the volunteers at the annual bird survey and banding event in Whigg Meadow. This is a moderate hike. At an elevation of about 5,000', it is well shaded and has a terrific 360 degree view just off the trail at Whigg Meadow.



Keith Mertz, Carolyn Sewell, Tom Sewell, Bo Bobinski, Ellie Doughty, Sharon Atcheson and Tom Atcheson. Photo by Brenda Harris.



Birds are released after being measured and banded for identification.



Most of the birding crew was from Mississippi State University. Shown in the foreground is a young Barred Owl which was recently rescued from an accidental encounter with a fence.



Along the BMT path is a marker to an unknown person killed by the Kirkland Bushwackers, a group which terrorized this area near the end of the Civil. It was headed by John Jackson Kirkland who was a Confederate deserter in the war. Most of the members were also deserters of either the Confederate or Union Armies.

Mark next September on your calendar for a really special and educational hike on our fabulous BMT trails!

Join us for a BMTA Christmas at Merciers

December 7, 2019, 6:00–9:30

Dining Selections

Your choice of

Braised Beef

Chicken Marsala

Grilled Salmon

Pasta Primavera

Garlic Mashed Potatoes /
French Green Beans with
Roasted Tomatoes /
Rolls & Butter
Hot Cider, Coffee, Tea or
Water



Cash Bar

Merciers' Hard Cider or
Red / White Wine from
Georgia Wineries



Fried Pies for Dessert!



For reservations, go to: BMTA Christmas at Merciers
Payment Must be Received by **11/22/2019!**

Public Lands Day Atop Brasstown Bald

by George Owen with photo courtesy of Krista Robb

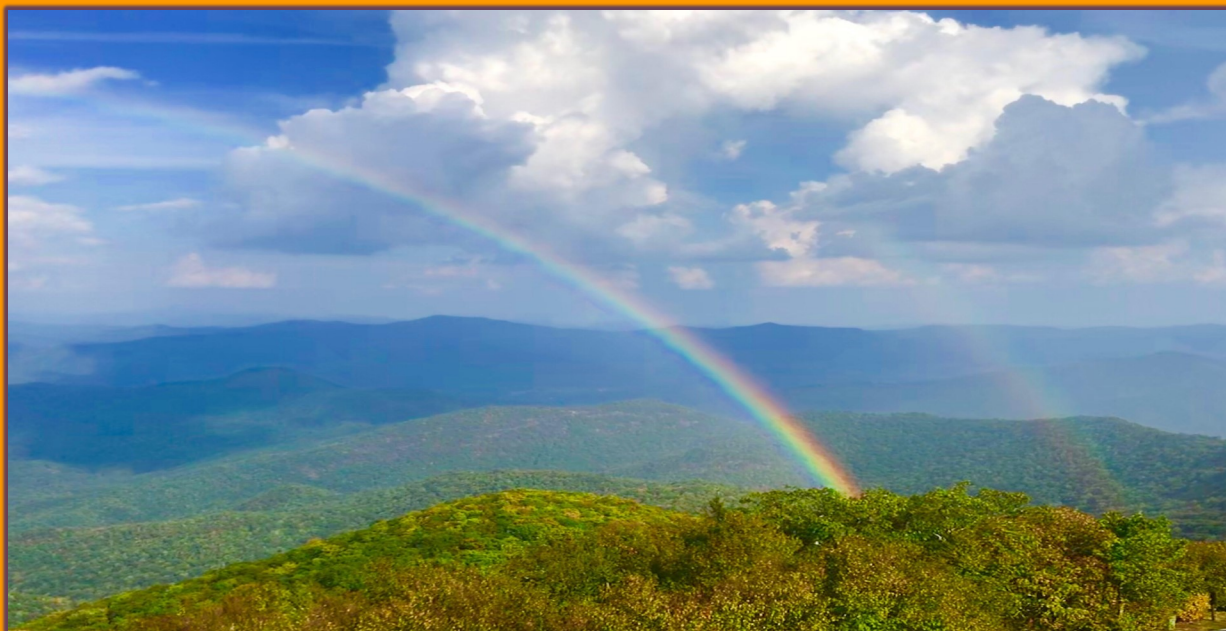
On Saturday, September 28, the three hiking clubs that also maintain much of the trails in North Georgia were on hand with their club displays as hundreds of park visitors attended National Public Lands Day atop Georgia's highest peak (4,784'), Brasstown Bald.

Initially this event's original planning was for a hike on one of the Bald's trails. Krista Robb, of the Cradle of Forestry, originally set this up with George Owen, who was representing the Mountain High Hikers. The two of them then decided to invite all three main hiking clubs of North Georgia to bring their displays. Thus the Benton MacKaye Trail Association, the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club and the Mountain High Hikers were all invited and graciously accepted to bring their displays and personnel.

Representing the BMTA were Darcy Douglas, Jeff DePaola, Frank Forehand, Joy Forehand, George Owen, Steve Pruett and Ben Yaun. George and Darcy were supposed to lead a family hike on the nearby Wagon Train Trail, but lack of publicity and people showing up for that event led to its cancellation. (A good thing too- just a little later a terrifically fierce lightning and thunder storm struck the area!)

An annual event, National Public Lands Day is celebrated the last Saturday in September. Here in North Georgia it is focused on the 753,000-acre Chattahoochee National Forest. In the East, New York state has the most public land (ca. 34%), with Florida being second (ca. 32%). Although Georgia is the largest state in the East in land size, it rates far below these other two states percentage-wise in public lands.

We wish to thank all you BMTAers who gave hours of your weekend atop Brasstown Bald greeting people, sharing BMTA information and answering people's questions about hiking.



TN/NC Work Trip

John Muir Trail from Big Bend to Wildcat Creek

by Richard Harris, Crew Leader

We had a large group of maintainers, 25 in all, including several Boy Scouts from BSA Troop 118 in Athens, come out on National Public Lands Day for our regularly scheduled work trip on the Benton MacKaye Trail along the Hiwassee River. We broke up into three separate crews to cover the entire four mile section efficiently.

Crew One consisted of Barry Allen on chainsaw and Ed and Clare Sullivan overseeing the Scouts. This crew hiked 1.2 miles to the Wildcat Creek crossing from the Apalachia Powerhouse. From there they logged out about 10 trees with chainsaw and numerous small trees with handsaws. They then worked their way back toward Towee Creek brushing and lopping out the trail on the way. Two Scouts were stung by yellow jackets, but survived with the application of chewing tobacco juice to the stings. Clare and Ed did a stellar job with the tailgate safety session with the Scouts as well as keeping them on task the whole long, hot day. The Scouts did a great job, having a lot of fun in the woods with woods tools (hand saws, loppers and swingblades) and learning that trails don't stay clear on their own. Clare said one Scout shouted "I am going to use my puberty muscles on this one" as he threw branches down the side of the hill. This crew with the Scouts covered four miles in their trek without any complaints.

Crew Two, led by Ken Jones, logged and brushed out the trail from Towee Creek until meeting up with Crew One... logging out about 11 trees and brushing out this section. Actually this section was still in pretty good shape from our last work trip.

Crew Three, headed up by Rick and Brenda Harris, logged and brushed out the section from Towee Creek to Big Bend.

Afterwards, we all retired to Flip Flop Burgers for beer and hamburgers for the adults, pop and burgers for the Scouts. The BMTA also treated all the Scouts to free ice cream. The Scouts still had enough energy left to play vigorous games of cornhole. But, a later report from the Scoutmaster Jason Bush is that some of them slept all the way home in the cars.



BMTA and GSU National Public Lands Day on the Jacks River Trail

by Bob Cowdrick

Saturday, September 28, was National Public Lands Day, which is the largest single-day volunteer effort for America's public lands. The first National Public Lands Day was started in 1994 by three federal agencies and 700 volunteers. This year hundreds of thousands of volunteers came together to assist with various projects designed to restore and enhance public parks, forests, waterways and more.

The BMTA teamed up with Georgia State University's (GSU's) Touch the Earth organization to maintain the Jacks River Trail. We accessed the trail from Dally Gap in the Cohutta Wilderness. With a group of 13 volunteers, we divided into three teams; two crosscut and one lopper team. We made a significant impact by removing 18 trees blocking the trail, trimmed back the encroaching rhododendrons and slingblading the briars! This effort required two river crossings across very slippery algae-clad rocks.

I have worked on many crosscut crews and I have yet to see a group, such as GSU's Touch The Earth who worked so well together and learned new skills so quickly. The GSU's crosscut sawing abilities were commendable.

If crosscut were a collegiate varsity sport, they would be ranked #1!

Our one small day of trail maintenance on National Public Lands Day will benefit hikers, backpackers,

Blazing Away!

Photos courtesy of Judy Wade and Keith Mertz



Have a 4WD or a Truck and No Section to Maintain?

by Clare Sullivan

Section 13e, Wildcat Creek to Forest Service Road 22B, near Coker Creek is an absolutely beautiful section that needs a maintainer. It's only 3.1 miles with beautiful views of the Hiwassee River, Coker Creek and Wildcat Creek. A maintainer can access this section from the north via Hwy 68 and FS Road 22B. There's a beautiful campsite on Coker Creek right at the trailhead. The Narrows, a deep narrow gorge through which the old river bed flows, is another notable feature in this section. The section can also be accessed on the Hiwassee side via the Apalachia Powerhouse by walking under the swinging bridge and hiking 1.2 miles.



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!**

Big South Fork Adventure

by Mike Pilvinsky

Just after Labor Day, five BMTA members met at the Bandy Creek Campground, which is located in the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area (BSF) in Tennessee. After three days of hiking, we moved to Blue Heron Campground in the Kentucky section of BSF. The BSF is a little known and hidden gem of the National Park System.

Perhaps the signature features of the BSF and adjoining Daniel Boone National Forest are the many sandstone arches, some of which are massive, and all are magnificent. Hiking thru southern forests which are not dissimilar to those that surround the BMT, we were completely stunned to find stone arches, sandstone cliffs and “Rock Houses,” which made us think, “Wait a minute, we should be seeing this in Utah,” not on the East Coast of the US. This is such a special place that I was torn between telling you about the BSF and protecting it by not spreading the word. On our last day we found another massive arch in the Daniel Boone National Forest which adjoins the BSF in Kentucky.

There is a lot of history to be found in the BSF as well. On our first whole day in the BSF fork we hiked to Charit Creek Back Country Lodge which includes one of the oldest man-made structures in the National Park System. Charit Creek is a lodge in the same fashion as the Hike-Inn and Mount LeConte. On another day we went for a ride on the Big South Fork Scenic Railway to the old mining community of Barthel. We followed that up with a visit to the Blue Heron mining community which is now a huge interactive historical display operated by the National Park Service. From there we hiked the Blue Heron Loop where we found abandoned coal mine shafts and veins of coal in the cliffs.



Yahoo Falls Arch and the massive “Rock House” beside it.

If you are a hiker, the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area will provide you with some of the most varied and magnificent scenery you will find east of the Mississippi River. We will definitely return as we have so much more to see there.



Mike Pilvinsky ponders the South Arch on the Twin Arches Trail.

Small Group but Fine Hike

by George Owen with photos by Barbara Knysz

Three is all that showed up for the September 21 BMTA trek for the sturdy 7.6-mile hike over four mountains from Wilscot Gap to Shallowford Bridge.

One person on the hike said the leader should not have advertised it as a fairly hard hike. The leader quietly surmised privately that the low attendance was because of the leader himself!!

The day began with everyone meeting at the Village Restaurant in Blue Ridge. We shuttled a car at the Toccoa River/Dial Road trailhead and Wilscot Gap. We then began with the hardest of the four mountain climbs in the midst of the hottest summer now on record in the area - the 1.3 mile climb to the summit of Tipton Mountain. We tackled three more up and down mountains, first over Brawley and Garland peaks then Free Knob before our final descent to the Toccoa River - all on the Benton MacKaye Trail. (With a car ready for us where the trail from Free Knob first hits the river and everyone ready to quit, we abandoned walking the final 0.4 mi. to Shallowford Bridge on the road).

Two items of special note on this hike: 1) The west downhill side of Tipton Mountain was so overgrown that we couldn't see our feet and had to feel and plod our way very carefully over a quarter mile. This was the only problem encountered anywhere on this 7.6 miles. (Overgrowth was reported to the GA Maintenance Director). 2) At Ledford Gap we encountered several birders with telescope and field glasses who had walked in on the Forest Service Road all the way from GA Hwy. 60 at Wilscot Gap. They were seeking the golden wing warblers in this special southernmost semi-cleared area for that bird. They had only found a couple of nesting warblers - less than expected from past experience. Yes, we ate lunch just minutes after noon atop Brawley Mountain under the fire tower with the great view down the power line cut.

So mid-afternoon the three of us, Tom Johnson, Barbara Knysz and leader George Owen, completed the hike to the Toccoa River -- a most pleasant and congenial small group with quite well-matched natural paces.



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@usf.edu or 706-636-1741.

The hikes for the next couple of months are listed below. Fall is approaching and there is no better place to be than in the woods. More hikes will be forthcoming, so check the Activities Calendar of the website and next month’s newsletter for updates. Enjoy.

October

October 9 (Wednesday) East Trek Hike: Iron Hill Trail at Red Top Mountain State Park. 2.3 miles, moderate. Although rated moderate due to some elevation change, the hike is short and the pace will be easygoing. Should be pretty in fall. Also includes a waterfall.

For more details or sign-up, e-mail, call, or text Sara at jsbland@windstream.net, 770-366-6053. Led by Martha Fowler and Sara Bland.

October 11 (Friday) Turtletown Creek Falls. 4 miles, moderate. Two beautiful waterfalls in one short hike.

Contact hike leader Evelyn Yarns at eyarns@sprynet.com.

October 18 (Friday) Flat Creek Loop. **DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE** (adult humans may bring a leashed dog) 5.6 miles, moderate.

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

October 24 (Thursday) Wildcat Creek Loop. 4.7 miles, moderate.

Contact hike leader Mike Pilvinsky at mikepilvinsky@hotmail.com.

Just in! BMTA at the Hike Inn February 20 at half price!
For additional information, contact Ken Cissna at kcissna@usf.edu or 813-310-6084.

The deadline for the November Newsletter is October 23. Thank you!