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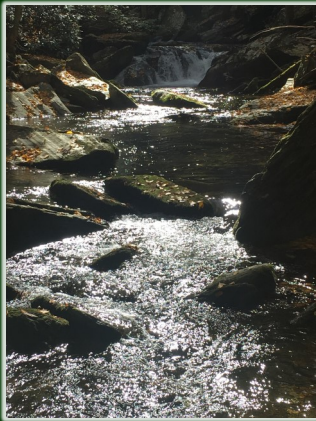
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## BMTA Officers 2019-2020

President:	Barry Allen
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Secretary:	Clare Sullivan
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TN/NC M/C:	Rick Harris
Smokies Coord:	Larry Dumas
Hiking Director:	Ken Cissna
Store:	Ken Cissna
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Publicity:	Jeff DePaola
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Past President:	Tom Keene
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State Rep GA:	Bob Cowdrick
State Rep TN/NC:	Larry Van Dyke



**BMTA Headquarters**

# Benton MacKaye Trail Association



VOLUME 37, ISSUE 2

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## President's Column

*“The raising of that flag on Suribachi means a Marine Corps for the next five hundred years.” James Forrestal*

Occasionally, it is OK to digress from the business of the BMTA and talk about a few other things. Many of our members are veterans and should be proud of the time they served the country in various branches of the armed forces. While February is not the month we generally recognize Veterans Day or Memorial Day, for Marines of the Spearhead – the 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Division -- this *February, 2020, marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their landings on Iwo Jima and the raising of the flag on Suribachi.* It took 36 days to take Iwo Jima, but the 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Division, along with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Division, never hesitated in their task. As Chester Nimitz later said about the Marines on Iwo Jima, “uncommon valor was a common virtue.”

For members of the Spearhead, February is and was their Veterans and Memorial tribute -a month when living members of the 5<sup>th</sup> paid homage to friends who did not come home. One quarter of all Marines who died in World War II died on Iwo Jima. Very few veterans of this time are with us today, so take a minute to remember their sacrifices for this great country. Thanks to my father -- who passed 10 years ago -- Sgt. A.T. Allen, 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Division and part of the ‘greatest generation.’

Leadership is the single most important factor in the success of any organization. As the Benton MacKaye grows and tasks itself to improve the trail – to make the BMT the finest mid-distance trail in the nation – identifying the right leaders to guide us into the future is absolutely critical. There is always a balance of combining old and new as we plan for the future. I have been reminded on more than one occasion that our board has very few early members of the BMTA still serving. At the same time, there are a few people out there who could be fantastic leaders if given the chance. I would encourage all of our members to consider whether they are able to provide additional leadership to the BMTA and where their strengths might best be used.

Phil Guhl and I have recently discussed the development of additional work trip leaders for the Georgia sections of trail. Phil does an outstanding job of organizing our monthly work trips, but at the same time, we recognize the need to bring along new people to help in this role. The role of maintenance director can be a daunting and time consuming task if others aren't brought in to help.

With this in mind, Phil is compiling a list of people to approach about helping out with work trips later this year. The goal is to find at least six or eight people who can serve as leaders or co-leaders for one or two trips. As we have said, the hope is to lessen the burden – at least a bit – on the maintenance director, while cultivating people in this role for the future. Rick Harris has done exactly the same thing in Tennessee and North Carolina by using Dick Evans and Steve Cartwright to help share the burden of organizing trips, then drafting a number of other members to help lead the work day event.

If you are a regular participant in maintenance trips in Georgia, I ask you to consider becoming part of the leadership team Phil is putting together. The first step is to contact Phil at [bmtaphil@gmail.com](mailto:bmtaphil@gmail.com) and become part of the conversation.

By the way, thanks to all who have volunteered to help lead in Tennessee/North Carolina. And well done to Keith Mertz who led the January work trip in Tennessee.

Till next month.....



### ***Time to Renew Your Membership!***

Use this link to Renew Now:

<http://www.bmta.org/Membership.php>

### **NEW EMAIL ADDRESS FOR REPORTING HOURS**

[reportworkhours@bmta.org](mailto:reportworkhours@bmta.org)

Emails sent to this address go to:

**Phil Guhl (GA) / Rick Harris (TN/NC) /  
Darcy Douglas (Blaze Team) / Joy Forehand (Database)**

Also use to send updates for trail conditions to maintenance directors and for updating BMTA's new website.

## Membership Milestone

by Frank Forehand, Membership Director

BMTA has now hit a milestone in the number of total memberships ... over 400 ... 403 to be exact! This includes 181 Individual Memberships, 91 Family, 60 Student / Retired, 62 Life and nine Corporate Memberships. This is an increase of nine per cent over last year's total membership count of 369. Thank you to all who have renewed for 2020! We still have 62 Memberships from 2019 who have not renewed. If you have not renewed, please click [HERE](#) to renew now. Remember the funds from your membership fees and / or donations help us purchase tools and materials for maintaining the trail as well as building reserves to be used in the event a parcel of land becomes available that would enable us to move the BMT off of a road walk.

I especially would like to thank Larry VanDyke for his email / online Membership Drive and also extend thanks to Ken Cissna and Ed Sullivan for their help in contacting members who have not yet renewed.

We definitely appreciate our Corporate Members and urge you to visit them – be sure to mention you're a member of BMTA. This month's new and renewing Corporate Members are:



**Blue Jeans Pizza and Pasta Factory**  
Blue Ridge, GA  
<https://www.bluejeansblueridge.com/>



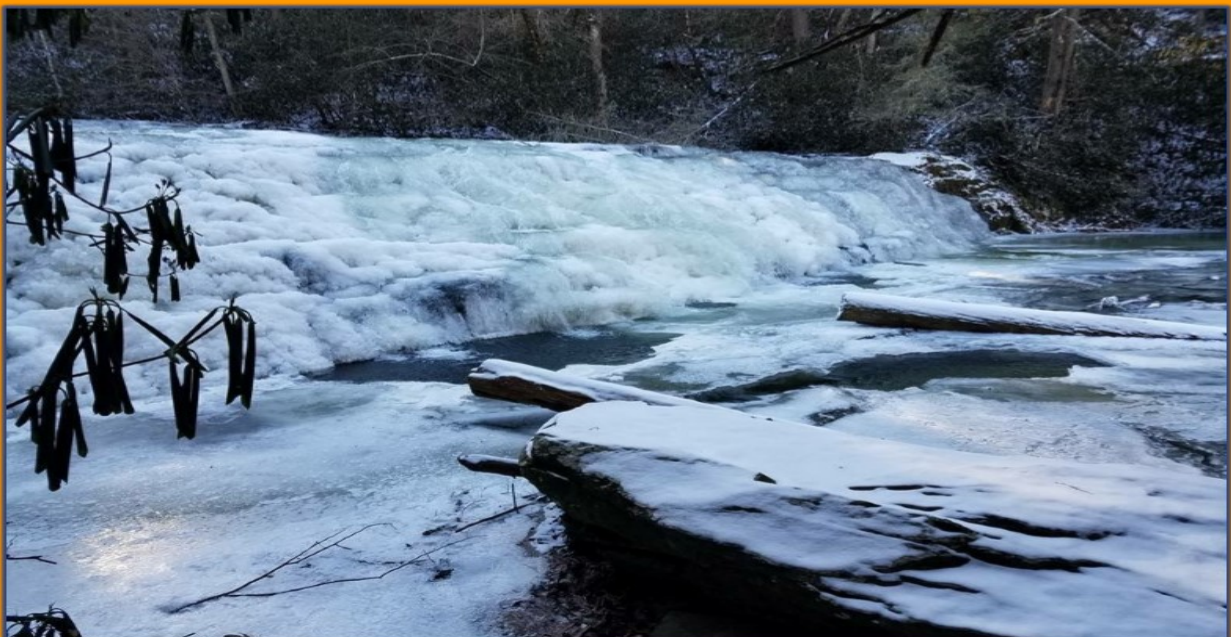
**Flip Flop Burgers**  
Reliance, TN  
<https://www.flipflopburgers.com/>



**Ducktown Copper Inn**  
Copperhill, TN  
<https://www.theducktowncopperinn.com/location>



**Lowery & Associates Land Surveying, LLC**  
Cartersville, GA  
<https://lowerylandsurveys.com/>



## Wilscot Gap to the Iron Bridge

by Tom Sewell

On Saturday, January 4, our hike gave us a taste of our local winter weather. We started with 55 degrees in a drizzle for the three miles to Brawley Mountain. At Brawley Mountain the sun finally made its appearance so we could enjoy our snacks. The beautiful weather stayed with us to the end of the hike at the Iron Bridge. However, just so we could experience the full winter experience, snow and ice began to greet us as we returned to our shuttle vehicles at Wilscot Gap. A great group of hikers had a taste of winter hiking. A note for anyone doing this hike in the future. If you want to leave a vehicle at the Iron Bridge please contact the Iron Bridge Cafe in advance at (706) 632-4700 for permission to park. There is NO public parking anywhere near the Toccoa River/Iron Bridge/Aska Intersection.



Mike Pilvinsky, Frances Burdick, Barbara McCollum, Scott Jones, Paul Black and Tom Johnson.



**Don't Wait  
Join Now!**

Use this link to Join:

<http://www.bmta.org/Membership.php>

## TN Work Trip Sections 14b/14c Unicoi Gap to Motorcycle Trail Intersection

by Keith Mertz

Eleven maintainers met at Coker Creek on a chilly, overcast day. After a brief safety meeting and a short talk about what we couldn't do at Unicoi Gap, five maintainers drove to Unicoi Gap and walked southbound while six maintainers drove to Buck Bald Road where it crosses the BMT and worked north and south. The primary missions on this work trip were logging out four blowdowns, refreshing blazes, brushing out and tread/water bar maintenance. All tasks were accomplished. For the most part this section is holding up pretty well considering it is a multi-use motorcycle / mountain bike / horse / hiking trail. The worst part of this section is under the power line where maintenance is not permitted.

Many thanks to our volunteers Barry Allen, Will Dostie, Rick and Brenda Harris, Ken and Phyllis Jones, Keith Mertz, Dave and Sue Ricker and Claire Sullivan.



## Talking Rock Goes to the Dogs

By Tom Sewell

Ten hikers and four dogs had a damp but wonderful hike on the Talking Rock Trails located just off Hwy 515 north of Jasper. The weather was threatening rain, but we started with a light mist and ended up with sunshine. After 2.75 miles of hiking, those with wet dogs decided to leave the group. We continued on for another mile with six hikers and no rain. One of the best things about the Talking Rock Trails is that you pass near the parking lot so you can decide when you want to stop. Three hardy hikers completed 7.2 miles. There were an additional three miles we could have completed. The trails have recently received a grant from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and they have installed an educational area called the "Aviary" with live bees, a Chimney Swift habitat and signage. It's a great place for a family outing.



**Hike Inn Half Price for BMTA Members**

**February 26-27**

**Contact Ken Cissna at [hikeleader@bmta.org](mailto:hikeleader@bmta.org)**

## Hikers and Wild Mushroom Lovers

by Kim Hainge

**Hikers and wild mushroom lovers, make your reservation and mark your calendar for Tuesday, April 14, 2020, for a very special experience!**

Drive over to Robbinsville, North Carolina, and learn about foraging for wild mushrooms along the Benton MacKaye Trail. In the morning, BMTA members Jim Kriner (botanist) and Kim Hainge (Entomologist and Naturalist) will lead a hike of approximately four miles starting at 10:00am at the Tapoco Lodge. We will head up to Yellowhammer Gap, then along Ike Branch and return on the Slickrock Trail leading back to the Lodge.

Whether you go on the hike or decide to explore some of the other wonderful trails in Graham County during the day, plan to attend this unique event in the evening. A gourmet treat awaits BMTA members. Chef Shea Blalock from Willow Tree Restaurant located in downtown Robbinsville will prepare a special dinner just for us. Each of the five courses will contain one species of choice edible mushroom. The dinner will be casual dress and information about the mushroom and how it is used will precede each course.

There are forty seats available for this culinary experience of a lifetime. The price of the dinner is \$40 each, not including gratuity. Take the opportunity to socialize with friends and sample gourmet dishes created with choice varieties of mushrooms. The dinner will be moderated by Kim Hainge, award-winning columnist and naturalist.

Call (828) 260-8158 for a reservation as soon as you can! It is recommended that you plan to spend the night in Graham County.



**APRIL 14**

**A Walk in the Woods Gourmet Delight!**

Moderated by local naturalist and award-winning columnist Kim Hainge, enjoy a five-course dinner, each course using a different type of mushroom, all prepared by Chef Shea Blalock.

Willow Tree Catering and Baking

302 Ford Street, Robbinsville, North Carolina 28771. Phone (828) 260-8158.

## Benton MacKaye Work-Walk-Week

By Dick Evans

**Mark your calendar now! Tuesday, May 19th thru Friday May 22nd.**

Here is your chance to visit the northern reaches of the Benton MacKaye Trail during spring. Enjoy nice temperatures! See Fontana Lake when it has water in it! Meet local folk in their quaint native garb! Meet your BMTA Friends! Tolerate other BMTA Members! We will have boat trips (some with a fee) to the north shore of Fontana Lake, doing our semi-annual cleanup trip, and allowing folks to hike parts of the BMT in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, in addition to other hikes on Yellow Creek Mountain and in the Joyce Kilmer Slickrock Wilderness.

Fontana Village has set special rates for us. To make reservations, call Fontana Village at 1-800-849-2258 and choose Option 1 for Reservations. Tell the Reservation Desk you are part of the "**Benton MacKaye Work-Walk-Week**" to get the special rates. Sample rates -Tent Campsite - \$12; Lodge Room - \$89; 2 Bedroom Cabin - \$119 (all rates plus 12.75% Sales Tax). The Village has multi-room cabins, RV sites, etc., available for the BMTA during this time.

Meals are "on-your-own" except we plan a group get together supper for Thursday evening with a big campfire at the Camping Area under Fontana Dam. We will have a full schedule of hikes, etc., closer to the dates. Hope we see you there!  
For more information, email "[BMTA@Frontier.com](mailto:BMTA@Frontier.com)".





## Upcoming Hikes

by Ken Cissna, Hiking Director

BMTA normally schedules four or five hikes per month, some “leisure” hikes that are shorter and easier and some five to eight miles and of moderate difficulty. 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 [hikeleader@bmta.org](mailto:hikeleader@bmta.org).

The hikes for the next couple of months are listed below. Winter hikes always provide great views and cool hiking temperatures, which for many hikers make for the best hiking season of the year. More hikes will be forthcoming, so check the Activities Calendar of the website, BMTA’s Facebook page, our various email alerts and next month’s newsletter for updates. Enjoy.

### February

**February 10** (Monday) BMT from Three Forks to No Name Bald (and back). DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog).

4.3 miles, moderate. Mostly along Long Creek. Mostly uphill going and reverse returning. Approximately 700’ of elevation change each way. We’ll include a side trip to Long Creek Falls.

Hike leader: Ken Cissna. For more information, contact [hikeleader@bmta.org](mailto:hikeleader@bmta.org).

**February 15** (Saturday) Cohuttas: From Dally Gap, join the BMT at Spanish Oaks, to Hemp Top and back. 8 miles, moderate. Uphill first half and downhill second. About 1000 feet elevation change each way.

Hike Leader Tom Sewell. For more information, contact [hikeleader@bmta.org](mailto:hikeleader@bmta.org).

**February 17** (Monday) Duncan Ridge Trail from Mulkey Gap to Fish Gap.

6 miles, moderate. This section has some moderate to strenuous ascents and descents.

Hike leader: Steve Dennison. For more information, contact [hikeleader@bmta.org](mailto:hikeleader@bmta.org).

**February 17** (Monday) East Lakeshore Trail – Canal Branch and Baker Hollow. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog).

4.7 miles, easy.

Hike leaders Rick and Brenda Harris. For more information, contact [hikeleader@bmta.org](mailto:hikeleader@bmta.org)

**February 20** (Thursday) Wagon Train Trail – Brasstown Bald.

Co-sponsored with Georgia Forest Watch. 5 miles, easy-moderate. Two miles of gentle downhill to the overlook and back, plus up to the tower if we’re feeling like that. We’ll be hoping for the spectacular ice formations on the trailside cliffs (if temperatures cooperate). **BMTA and GFW members only.**

Contact hike leaders Sue Harmon of GFW at [suepharmon@gmail.com](mailto:suepharmon@gmail.com) or 770-540-3672 or Ken Cissna of BMTA at [hikeleader@bmta.org](mailto:hikeleader@bmta.org) or 706-636-1741.

**February 26-27** (Wednesday–Thursday) Hike Inn.  
5 miles, moderate – each day. Overnight. **BMTA members only.**

Hike leader Ken Cissna. For more details, see page [seven](#) or contact [hikeleader@bmta.org](mailto:hikeleader@bmta.org).

## March

**March 6** (Friday) Hardy Hike: Bushwhacking through the Rich Mountains between Aska Road and Fall Branch Falls. 3 miles, strenuous because of the bushwhacking, though along an old road bed in some areas. Short shuttle. Limit 12 people. BMTA members only. Hiking the proposed re-route BMTA is considering between Aska Road and Fall Branch Falls. It will provide a chance to understand a proposed reroute of the trail off Stanley Creek Road and the eventual use of and need for donations and other funds to help purchase these 110 acres when the property eventually comes on the market. We can end the day with a late lunch at the Toccoa Riverside Restaurant.

Hike leader: BMTA President Barry Allen. For more information, contact [hikeleader@bmta.org](mailto:hikeleader@bmta.org).

**March 6** (Friday) Fall Creek Falls State Park Hikes, Spencer, TN. Co-sponsored with the Cherokee Hiking Club. **DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE** (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). 3 miles including a moderate to strenuous hike down to the base of the falls (1 mile round trip) and a 2 mile hike back to the Nature Center (easy) by way of Cane Creek Cascade, cross the cable suspension bridge and take a short hike to the base of the cascade. Fall Creek Falls, at 256 feet, is one of the highest falls in the Eastern US. Propose eating a late lunch in Pikeville, TN on the return trip.

Hike leader Larry Van Dyke. For more information, contact [Larry.VanDykeTN@gmail.com](mailto:Larry.VanDykeTN@gmail.com).

**March 18** (Wednesday) Caney Creek Trail.  
6 miles, moderate. Enjoy this exciting, historical hike to the ghost village on the Ocoee River. Hiking sticks recommended. Creek crossing. You might want to google "Caney Creek Village Cleveland TN" prior to the hike. Caney Creek Village existed from 1918-1939. It had a hotel, trolley, one-room schoolhouse, tennis court, electricity and indoor plumbing. Remains are there. We will shuttle from Hardee's in Ducktown.

Hike leader Clare Sullivan. For more information, contact [hikeleader@bmta.org](mailto:hikeleader@bmta.org).

**March 21** (Saturday) Cherohala Parkway, TN: BMT from Whigg Meadow to Fish Hatchery.  
7.3 miles, moderate. All downhill—starting elevation 4940' to final elevation of 2120' at the Tellico River. Lengthy shuttle.

Hike Leader Tom Sewell. For more information, contact [hikeleader@bmta.org](mailto:hikeleader@bmta.org).

**March 28** (Saturday) Wildcat Creek Loop.  
5 miles, moderate. Beginning at Wildcat Creek Campground, much of the trail runs near Wildcat Creek.

Hike Leader Steve Dennison. For more information, contact [hikeleader@bmta.org](mailto:hikeleader@bmta.org).

**March 30** (Monday) East Lakeshore Trail – Glendale Bridge and Coytee. **DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE** (adult humans may bring a leashed dog).  
5.2 miles, easy.

Hike leaders Rick and Brenda Harris. For more information, contact [hikeleader@bmta.org](mailto:hikeleader@bmta.org).

## April

**April 4** (Saturday) BMT: Highway 60 to the scenic Swinging Bridge over the Toccoa River and back. 7.4 miles, moderate.

Hike leader Steve Dennison. For more information, contact [hikeleader@bmta.org](mailto:hikeleader@bmta.org).

**April 14** (Tuesday) Identifying Wild Mushrooms along the BMT in the Robbinsville NC area. 4 miles, easy to moderate. Mark your calendar for this one—it's sure to be a very special experience! BMTA members Jim Kriner (botanist) and Kim Hainge (Entomologist and Naturalist) will lead a hike of approximately 4 miles starting at 10:00am at the Tapoco Lodge. We will head up to Yellowhammer Gap, then along Ike Branch and return on the Slickrock Trail leading back to the Lodge. See details on page seven.

For more information, contact [hikeleader@bmta.org](mailto:hikeleader@bmta.org).

**April 18** (Saturday) BMT Kimsey Hwy to Thunder Rock Campground in TN. 5.7 miles, moderate. Starting with a ¾ mile stretch with 500' uphill elevation change, then it's downhill all the way to the Ocoee River. This is just a spectacular hike along mostly a ridge. The shuttle is 15 miles (45 minutes). Kimsey "Hwy" is a historic Indian Trail. Views at the top of the Kimsey "Hwy" of the Hiwassee River Watershed are just breath taking.

Hike leader Tom Sewell. For further information, contact [hikeleader@bmta.org](mailto:hikeleader@bmta.org).

**April 25** (Saturday) Wildcat Creek Loop. 5 miles, moderate. Beginning at Wildcat Creek Campground, much of the trail runs near Wildcat Creek.

Hike Leader Steve Dennison. For more information, contact [hikeleader@bmta.org](mailto:hikeleader@bmta.org).



*Save the Dates!*

**November 13-15, 2020**

**BMTA Hike Fest and Annual Meeting**

Unicoi Lodge - Helen, GA

For reservations call (800) 573-9659.

To receive your discount -

**Mention the Benton MacKaye Trail Association, Use Code 08174!**

**The deadline for the March Newsletter is Wednesday, March 4.  
Thank you!**