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BMTA Headquarters

Benton MacKaye Trail Association



VOLUME 37, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2020

President's Column

"The first step towards getting somewhere is to decide you're not going to stay where you are." J.P. Morgan

A day's hike always begins with that first step. As we take a first step into the New Year, let's bear in mind a few things from the past few years that continue to move forward.

1-**Membership numbers** continue to move ahead, with 2019 membership reaching an all-time high!

2-**Maintenance of the trail** continues to improve, especially in remote, hard to work areas. Work trip turnout has allowed us to cover MORE mileage in LESS time. In addition, the BMTA has been able to help with work on sister trails and has made plans to further this commitment in the new year!

3-**Communication** with membership has improved significantly in the last six months through upgraded e-mail service. We continue to make improvements in this field. A new Website platform is under development and should be running in the first quarter of 2020 or early in the second quarter.

4-**Outreach** has reached levels that we have never seen before. We are engaging people with social media platforms and as well as with more traditional methods such as festivals and outdoor events.

All in all, I could not be happier with the response from the membership in moving the Association forward. The Association has decided that the way to get somewhere is not to stay where we were – as JP Morgan put it, but to take that first step. At the same time, we need focus in 2020 on a very critical need – **Trail or Corridor Improvement**. We have several opportunities in this area with the top three as follows:

1-Stanley Creek road walk.

2-Boardtown and Bushy Head road walk.

3-Section 7a improvements through private property and the Laurel Ridge Community.

Take the Sandy Creek road walk: The BMTA has long attempted to work an arrangement with a private landowner in the Stanley Creek area to help move our trail off of much of the road walk. The land involved is roughly 110 acres and connects a small tract of USFS land with a much larger tract of USFS land adjoining the Rich Mountain Wilderness. While the landowner is not hostile to the Association, they are simply not interested in doing anything with the land at this time. Three years ago, I walked much of the Forest Service land with several BMTA members and with the USFS; the Association received preliminary support for much of the proposed re-route on USFS land. But the private land is critical in getting the trail up from Stanley Creek Road in the right location. We are looking at alternative locations – also involving private land – to get the trail off of Stanley Creek Road and into the Forest Service land. While these locations don't eliminate as much of the road walk as we would like, with access through some of these lands, we could potentially begin the difficult process of flagging the National Forest lands for trail and NEPA studies. This could cut years off any final process should something eventually work out with the private acreage.

All three of the opportunities listed above are critical to our long term goal of getting the trail off the road and into the National Forest. Since all of these 'opportunities' involve private land, solutions could well involve rather substantial resources from the Association. And since private land is involved, I can assure you that a substantial amount of 'head-banging' will be involved. But the first -- and most important-- issue is the focus which we place on the problem of moving the trail from the road and into the forest. As JP Morgan said, "the first step toward getting somewhere is to decide you are not going to stay where you are."

The BMTA decided long ago that we didn't want to stay on roads if there were alternatives. Of course, there are generally alternatives – but at this stage, none are easy alternatives. Nevertheless, as a board, we will keep our membership informed as we explore and progress toward any changes to the trail.

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

Emails sent to this address automatically go to:

GA Maintenance Director, Phil Guhl.
TN / NC Maintenance Director, Rick Harris.
Hours Database, Joy Forehand.

This email address can also be used for sending trail condition updates to the maintenance directors as well as making the trail conditions available for posting on the new website (projected to launch by the end of March).

Thanks!!!

Trail of Tears Remediation Project Tellico Plains, TN Jan 29-Feb 7, 2020

by Rick Harris

TRAIL OF TEARS




Trail Remediation Project

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

WHEN

Wednesday, January 29
through
Friday, February 7, 2020
7:30am to 5:30pm
including the weekend

CONTACT TO SIGN UP

Melissa Twaroski 
Trail of Tears Coordinator for the U.S. Forest Service
melissa.twaroski@usda.gov
404-347-7250

We are able to accommodate up to
10 volunteers per day and request
that you email or call ahead.
(Please remember that this is a sacred site).

MUST BE 16 YEARS OR OLDER

REQUIREMENTS

Project involves:
Working outside
Walking on rough terrain
Bending, Lifting, Stooping
Getting your hands dirty

YOU NEED TO BRING / HAVE

Hiking or work boots with
ankle support
Winter clothing & outer-
wear
Work gloves
Your own lunch
Water bottle
Camp chair

Meet up location
information will be
provided to those
that email or call
and sign up.



Please consider joining us one or more days between Jan 29 and Feb 7, including the weekend days, to fix issues with the Unicoi Turnpike.

This section travels through the 400 acre parcel of land recently acquired by the USFS near Coker Creek and includes the site of Fort Armistead. The Unicoi Turnpike was used by settlers to travel between North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee through the low gap in the mountains, Unicoi Gap. The BMT runs right through this gap.

Fort Armistead was a waypoint for the Cherokee and Creek to move them from the mountains to Oklahoma around 1838 on the Trail of Tears. Fort Armistead was also the site of a Civil War encampment.

Eventually it is hoped that this stretch of the Unicoi Turnpike will be linked to the Unicoi Turnpike Historical Trail, which comes off the BMT near Unicoi Gap. Also, in the future a visitor center or placards may be built at the site of Fort Armistead.

As indicated in the flyer, there is a need for about 10 volunteers each of the 10 days of this project. Personnel with the USFS will be using machinery to repair the tread of the Unicoi Turnpike.

Volunteers will be smoothing and compacting the soil and will be involved in building wooden zig-zag fences and other activities. If you are available any of these days, sign up by contacting Melissa Twaroski as noted in the flyer. This is a great opportunity to support the activities of the USFS, the Cherokee Indian Nation and the Trail of Tears Association.

Representatives from the BMTA, the Thursday Tellico Trail Crew, the Southern Appalachian Back Country Horsemen and the Cherokee Hiking Club are meeting with Melissa in early January to work out the details for the remediation project. So keep an eye on the BMTA and Cherokee Hiking Club Facebook pages for further information, as well as the Tellico/Ocoee Volunteer Trail Crew Facebook page.

Georgia December Work Report

by Phil Guhl

The December work trip in Georgia was, once again, a success. Thirty-one brave souls came out to face the cool temperatures to put the finishing touches on the Big Stamp Gap parking lot and to clean out the world renowned collection of water diversions leading up to Springer Mountain.

I split the crew into three teams. I placed Barry Allen over the parking lot completion team (Team Fruition), Bob Cowdrick over a crew that started from the top of Springer cleaning water diversions down toward Big Stamp Gap (Team Nose Bleeds) and I took a handful of relatively new folks up from FS42 to learn more about the art and science of water diversions (Team Harmony).

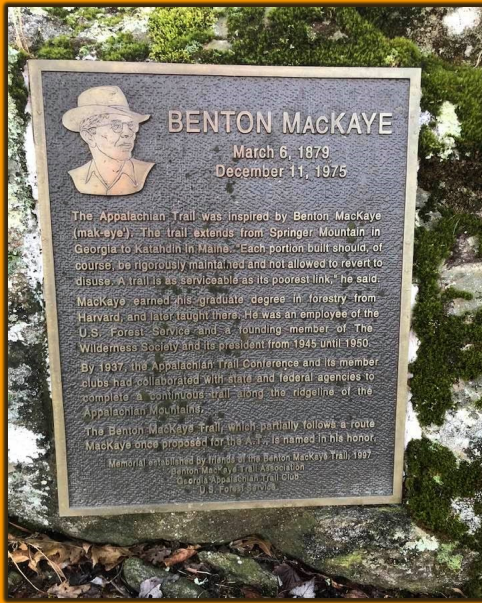


A WINNING TEAM!

Many of us started at Hardee's in Ellijay and the rest of the team showed up at Big Stamp Gap. I covered the Safety Debrief and Job Hazard Analysis and then the teams split up and headed out.

Team Fruition installed the long awaited kiosk, as well as signs for parking and those on the BMT access trail which is also blue blazed. Everything went up efficiently and quickly without any safety incidents. Barry felt a little more manual work was needed, so he had another load of heavy gravel delivered and the team set out to spread it, too. Barry "The Machine" Allen at the helm with many other "Machines" were a parking lot factory! ...and they didn't stop when the parking lot was done! They charged up the mountain and started working on water diversions.

Team Nose Bleeds with Bob Cowdrick at the lead headed up to the Southern Terminus of the Benton MacKaye Trail on Springer Mountain. These folks were eager to make the 1.7 mile trek to the top to see the start of the trail and the plaque dedicated to Benton MacKaye commemorating the trail.



PLAQUE AT SOUTHERN TERMINUS



NANCY MALONE AND ANN REDMAN

Team Harmony consisted of volunteers who were seeking guidance and instruction in the correct way to clean/install water diversions and knicks. At the end of the work trip, these folks were making some very pretty and functional diversions. They consisted of a large bowl with an amply large outlet for the water's discharge off the trail. All totaled, over 85 water diversions were either cleaned or installed. Great job by all three teams!

We had a sawyer planned, but a last minute family emergency prevented him from removing the blowdowns on the trail until later in the week.

We have come to expect to be spoiled by our wonderful Chuck Masters, Debra Guhl and Sue Ricker. After each trip they host Chuck Dynasty! This time was no different with three meat chili and pulled pork sandwiches; all to be washed down with hot apple cider and Sue's homemade cookies. The Chuck Masters said that the crews have grown to be a two Crockpot team and are on the verge of three Crockpots!

Last but not least, we need to give another honorable mention to our Texas Trekkers. These two super volunteers drive over 13 hours one way to attend our monthly work trips. They have done this now for four months in a row. Once they get here, they use no excuses and get right to work!

If you would like to be a part of maintaining the Benton MacKaye Trail, let me know (Phil Guhl, 770-548-5590, bmtaphil@gmail.com). We go out on the second Saturday of every month. This year there are two exceptions to this rule: June, National Trails Day is one, falling on the first Saturday. We usually support this day by working with other trail organizations on the first Saturday of June. In November, the monthly maintenance trip will be on the first Saturday because the Annual BMTA Meeting is on the second Saturday...the best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry...

On Saturday, January 11, we will be working on and around our busiest section in Georgia. Keep an eye out for the email as we seek to do some light housecleaning to start the year off by cleaning up Section 2d to the Toccoa River Swinging Bridge. It will include brush cutting, lopping, side hilling, de-rooting and the all-important trash pickup. I don't expect it to be too difficult (maybe it will be for the folks running the brush cutters) but it is the first trip of the new year, so I'll be easy on you! In February we will pick up the load a bit. Happy New Year! I look forward to a safe, productive and fun year working alongside each of you.

Thank you again volunteers! You make this trail the enjoyment it is for many hikers and users...and me!

Membership We Thank You!

by Frank Forehand, Membership Director

Thank you to all who have joined and /or renewed during our 2020 Membership Drive! Your membership fees help us purchase tools and supplies for maintaining and protecting the Benton MacKaye Trail. Having these funds on hand early in the new year is a big asset for planning BMTA's 2020 Budget!

BMTA is "growing". The total membership for last year was 369. Thanks to Larry Van Dyke's well-orchestrated 2020 Membership Drive, BMTA already has **364** members for 2020. Each of those memberships represents a valuable contribution towards making the Benton MacKaye Trail, the "pre-eminent mid-distance hiking trail in the nation".

For those of you who haven't joined or renewed, please do so soon! Remember, you also can join or renew by making a donation. For a donation of \$50 or more you receive either an Individual or a Family membership for the year 2020.

To join or renew, or to make a donation, go to our website. Scroll down to the Membership / Donation info on the left and select the option that is best for you. Make an online payment via PayPal or mail a check to the address listed on the Membership page.

Our thanks go out to our 2020 Corporate Members. We welcome renewing Corporate members, Save Georgia's Hemlocks and Starr Mountain Outfitters.



Mountain Place Realty, LLC
<https://www.mountainplacerealty.com/>



Historic Tapoco Lodge
<https://tapoco.com/>



North Georgia Treks Photography
www.northgeorgiatreks.com



Star Mountain Outfitters

<https://www.starmountainoutfitters.com/>



Save Georgia Hemlocks
<https://www.savegeorgiashemlocks.org/>



**Don't Wait
Join Now!**

Use this link to Join:

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

TN/NC BMTA January 2020 Work Trip

by Rick Harris

- ◆ **Where:** Sections 14b and 14c, Unicoi Gap to TN68.
- ◆ **When:** Saturday, January 25 at 8:30 AM.
- ◆ **Meet:** Coker Creek Welcome Center – intersection of TN 68 and Joe Brown Highway.
- ◆ **Plan for the day:**

Clean water bars and diversions.
Cut back vegetation encroaching on trail.
Cut blowdowns – at least three as of 12/11/19.
Refresh many faded blazes.

- ◆ **What to bring:**

Water, long pants, boots, gloves and a snack. Dress appropriately for January weather.

Dinner afterwards at a restaurant in Tellico Plains.

Contact: Keith Mertz at keithmertz@hotmail.com or 865-982-7368.

Half Price at the Hike Inn!

by Ken Cissna

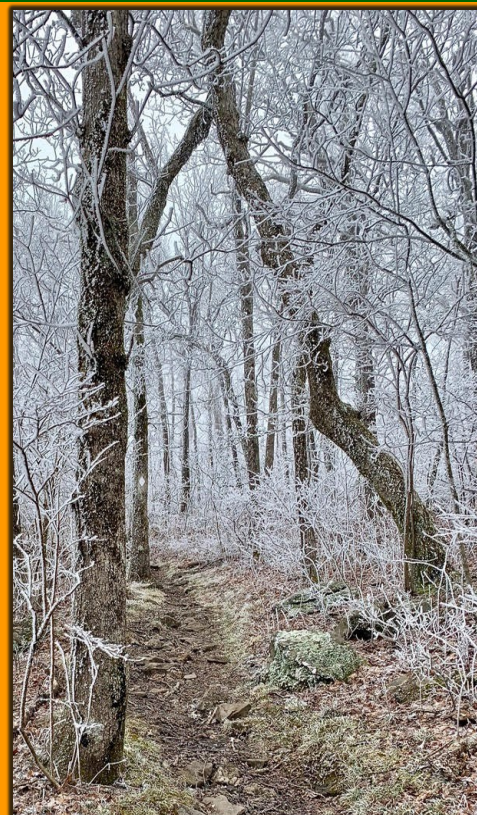
Again this year, BMTA will be able to enjoy a *half price* winter outing at the beautiful and historic Len Foote Hike Inn, Georgia's extraordinary backcountry lodge. Anyone wanting to go must reserve their room quickly before they're sold out.

We'll **arrive on Wednesday, February 26th, and depart on the 27th.** The hike is about five miles and of 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!

For information about the Len Foote Hike Inn, go to hike-inn.com/.

Maybe the best of my many visits was the time it snowed overnight so we woke to a winter wonderland and loved getting to hike out in the snow.

If you're interested, contact Ken Cissna, BMTA Hike Director, at hikeleader@bmta.org for further information.



Blood Mountain Hike

by Mike Pilvinsky

Light snow was predicted in North Georgia on Monday, December 2, at altitudes above 2000 feet. But by 8:00 AM it had pretty much stopped. As we approached Blood Mountain we even had glimpses of the sun. The temperature was predicted to be 24 degrees on top of the mountain but it had not registered below 35 degrees until we got to the Byron Reece trailhead where it was 32 degrees. However, Ken Cissna, the BMTA Hike Director, Tom Johnson and I, were determined to find out what it was like at the summit where we hoped to be treated to the magnificent views that the highest point on the Appalachian Trail in Georgia was famous for. Immediately, we noticed more snow than we had previously seen as we began the Byron Reece Trail. As we climbed up and then south on the Appalachian Trail we encountered more snow, more cold and more wind. The climb became more of a challenge than normal. Wet, slippery rocks, snow and an abundance of wet leaves on the trail required us to be extra careful with each step.

Once inside the stone CCC shelter on top of the mountain we ate our lunch and chatted with a couple of other hikers before heading back. It was very cold inside the shelter and it took about 45 minutes for our hands to warm up as we headed downhill. The hike back to the trailhead was considerably harder than the uphill due to the need to carefully plant each step. As we plodded on we clearly sensed the temperature rising at the lower altitudes.



Tom Johnson and Mike Pilvinsky halfway up the climb to Blood Mountain.

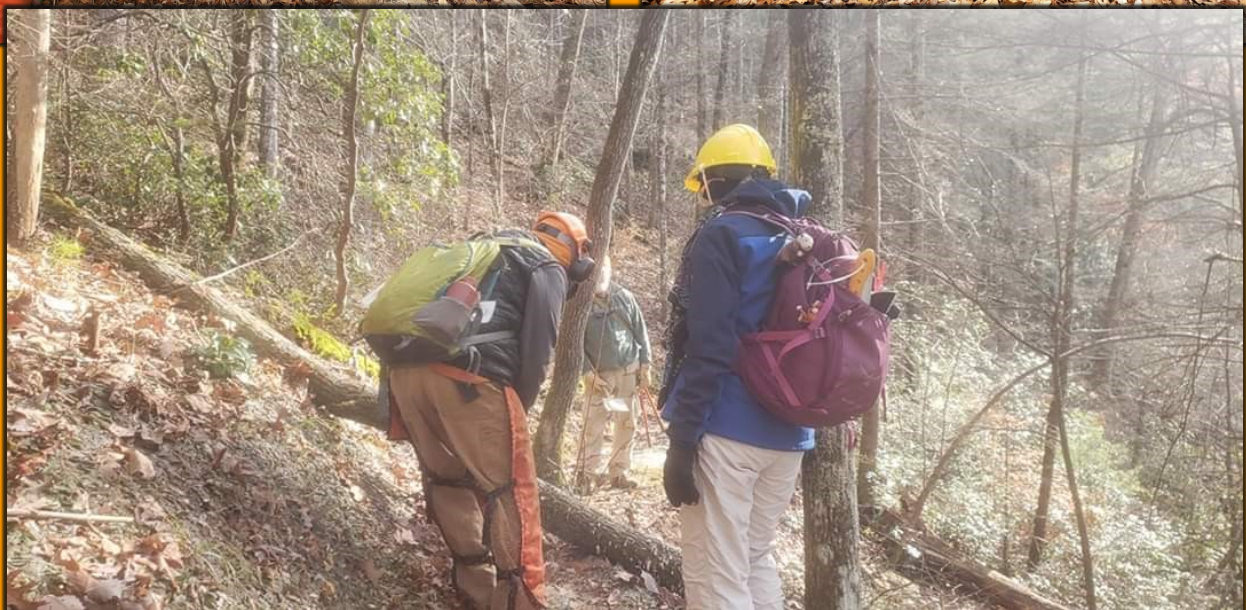
This was a fun and challenging hike. We were very happy to complete it without any injury. But it was worth the effort. After all, your most lasting memories are always about the challenging hikes and seldom about the easy ones. We look forward to another trip up 4,458 foot Blood Mountain, but maybe in the spring.

Tennessee Work Trip Sections 15b-c Sandy Gap to Tate Gap

by Rick Harris

Seventeen maintainers showed up for this pre-Christmas work trip on a chilly, overcast and windy day at high elevation. We met at the Coker Creek Welcome Center then carpooled to Waucheesi Bald at 3800' with 360 degree views of the surrounding mountains. After a brief safety talk, we broke into two crews.

Crew 1 with seven maintainers went down to Six Mile Gap, then turned north on the BMT toward Sandy Gap. This section wanders back and forth across the TN/NC line. The TN side is in the newly designated Upper Bald River Wilderness. We used primitive tools on the TN side and chainsaw and brushcutters on the NC side. We cleared four large trees and numerous smaller trees and stubs sticking out into the trail. This section is now fully logged and brushed out. Crew 1 exited via a vehicle previously spotted at Sandy Gap, so they only had to travel about three miles total, mostly downhill. They encountered several hunting dogs and at Sandy Gap there were several trucks and bear hunters trying to locate their dogs via their GPS trackers. We all enjoyed speaking with the hunters, learning what is involved in bear hunts and later retrieving their dogs.



Continued next page

Crew 2 also went down to Six Mile Gap, but turned south toward Tate Gap. This crew removed five large trees and a few other smaller trees with chainsaws. The corridor was also lopped and brushcut out the entire two miles up and down some steep knobs. Also, Keith Mertz and Judy Wade refreshed all the blazes on this section. So this section is now completely brushed and logged out and the blazes have been refreshed. Crew 2 had to backtrack to Waucheesi Bald, making this a rather arduous work trip.



We then met back at the Coker Creek Welcome Center and went our various ways home.

Overall, it was another great work trip in the Tennessee mountains. The views were magnificent, especially with the leaves off the trees.

Volunteers included Rick and Brenda Harris, Phil and Debra Guhl, Ken Jones, Lynette Linn, Keith Mertz, Rick Parks, Bob Nelson, Dave and Sue Ricker, Ben Yaun, Steve Cartwright, Barry Allen, Judy Wade, Steve Bayliss and Nelson Ashbrook.

Bear Hair Trail

by Larry Dumas

The day was sunny and cool for the eight hikers who joined me on the Bear Hair Trail Saturday, December 7. The trailhead is located in Vogel State Park and is a 4.1 mile loop trail over the lower ridges of Blood Mountain with long-distance vistas in the winter once the leaves have fallen. The trail leaves the park and travels into the Chattahoochee National Forest and the Blood Mountain Wilderness. It is a nice hike with several crossings that for most of the way, follows a fast moving stream. From the Vogel Overlook you can view Lake Tranllyta. Besides hike leader Larry Dumas, the hikers included Tom Atcheson, Toni Freeman, Scott and Daisie Jones, Rich Karolick, Heather Mossatt, Linda Partington and Todd Valentini.

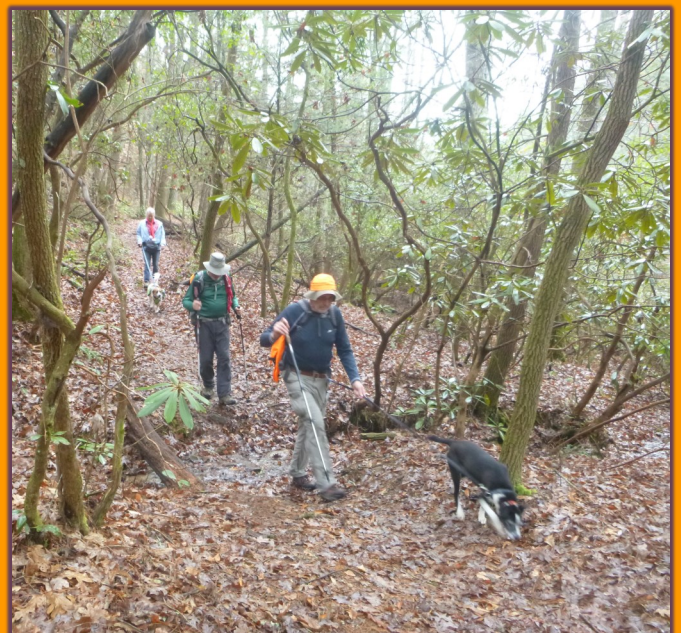


A stunning vista!

Bushy Head Gap

by Tom Sewell with photos by Tom Atcheson and Suzi Downing

On December 5, 2019 the BMTA hike went from Bushy Head Gap to the highest mid-point between Hudson Gap and McKenny Gap. This is a moderate hike of six miles which is mostly follows along a ridge. Winter provided beautiful views of the Cohuttas, Rich Mountains and Cashes Valley. We were blessed with sunny skies. Thanks to the work by trail maintainer Bob Cowdrick, the trail was in great condition. Sixteen hikers had a great day and were joined by three friendly neighborhood dogs begging for attention.



BMT/AT Loop at Springer Mountain

by Mike Pilvinsky

On Monday, December 9, five BMTA members met along Double Head Gap Road in Gilmer County and drove to the Springer Mountain Parking Lot. After putting on another layer of rain proof gear we walked south on the AT to the first trail junction with the BMT. We then followed the BMT across two streams, through a rhododendron thicket and into the newly created Big Stamp Gap parking lot. After discussing the background and history of the parking lot, we proceeded south on the BMT to Owen Overlook where we were denied the beautiful view by the low hanging clouds and mist. When we arrived at the top of Springer Mountain, we gave one of our newest members, Francis Burdick, formerly from Vermont, a complete tour including the Benton MacKaye Memorial, and the AT plaques and shelter. After a light snack we walked north on the AT to the parking lot where we gladly shed our rain gear for the comfort of a warm dry ride back to our meeting place along Double Head Gap Road.



Tom Atcheson, Tom Sewell, Sharon Atcheson and Francis Burdick at the Benton MacKaye Memorial on top of Springer Mountain.



Tom and Sharon Atcheson, Mike Pilvinsky, and Francis Burdick at the Springer Mountain Shelter.

The Swinging Bridge, An Ideal Wedding Venue

Ron Zadroga loved to hike / run on the Benton MacKaye Trail ... so much so that when he and his then fiancée, Sandra, were planning their New Year's Eve (2001) wedding, they decided the perfect venue would be on the Benton MacKaye Trail's Swinging Bridge.

Ron's chosen route to the Swinging Bridge was the Benton MacKaye Trail. In 19 degree weather with a dusting of snow, Ron, together with eight or nine friends (including the minister, Mike Reed), traversed the BMT from the trailhead on HWY 60 to the bridge. The bride, along with the rest of the wedding party and guests, chose the less challenging route ... they drove in on the FS road, leaving just a short hike to the bridge.

The minister wisely advised not to perform the service on the bridge ... over the water. It was so cold, he was afraid the ring could be dropped into the Toccoa River below. Consequently, Ron and Sandra exchanged vows on the south end of the bridge.



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 Bed-room 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".



Christmas at Merciers

by Joy Forehand with photos courtesy of Suzanne Zuckerman

Mercier Orchard in Blue Ridge was the venue for the first BMTA Christmas event.

The twenty-six attendees enjoyed their favorite hard cider from Merciers and / or California wine while they dined on scrumptious Grilled Salmon, Braised Beef, Chicken Marsala and Pasta Primavera. The dessert was Mercier's famous fried pies à la mode.

All in all, it was a great chance to relax and chat with fellow BMT enthusiasts!



Hmm. Are these the same people we see on the trail? They sure clean up well!

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.

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.

January

January 4 (Saturday) BMT Wilscot Gap to Iron Bridge at Shallowford Road.
7.8 miles, moderate. Beautiful views of mountains and Lake Blue Ridge. Some shuttle.

Hike Leader Tom Sewell. For more information, contact hikeleader@bmta.org.

January 13 (Monday) Select Trails of Talking Rock Nature Preserve.
DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). 4-5 miles, easy to easy-moderate.

Hike Leader: Ken Cissna. For more information, contact hikeleader@bmta.org.

January 18 (Saturday) Jarrard Gap Trail.
6.8 miles, moderate. A loop hike from Lake Winfield Scott up Jarrard Gap Trail to Bird Gap and then back down to Slaughter Creek Trail.

Hike leader: Larry Dumas. For more information, contact hikeleader@bmta.org.

January 21 (Monday) Leisure Hike: Bear Creek Trail.
3-4 miles, easy to moderate.

Hike leader: Martha Fowler. For more information, contact hikeleader@bmta.org

February

February 1 (Saturday) Amadahy Loop.
4 or 5 miles (depending on whether we take in the peninsula with the marine campground), easy to moderate. Along the shore of Carter’s Lake.

Hike leader Steve Dennison. For more information, contact hikeleader@bmta.org

February 8 (Saturday) 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.

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.

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

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 or 770-540-3672 or Ken Cissna of BMTA at 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.

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.



The deadline for the February Newsletter is January 29, 2020. Thank you!