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BMTA Officers 2019-2020

- President: Barry Allen
- Vice President: Joy Forehand
- Secretary: Clare Sullivan
- Treasurer: Margaret Meadows
- GA M/C: Phil Guhl
- TN/NC M/C: Rick Harris
- Smokies Coord: Larry Dumas
- Hiking Director: Ken Cissna
- Store: Sue Ricker
- Membership: Frank Forehand
- 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

If everybody is thinking alike, then somebody isn't thinking. George S. Patton

In almost two years as President of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association, I have learned the importance of listening to other opinions. Individuals in our organization often don't agree on topics of the day, but making an informed decision is best done after listening to many voices in a discussion. As a leader, George S. Patton realized he needed to hear differing opinions on a subject. Our quote of the day is a reminder of the importance of individual thought.

At a recent Association board meeting, we proved that our Board is full of individual thinkers, who did not always think alike. Patton would be proud! A small committee within the board had been tasked with writing and presenting certain changes to the Bylaws -- changes which involved updating the role of 'webmaster' to include other electronic media functions. More critically, we discussed changes that affect the amendment process as well as voting, since, in today's world, large in-person meetings may be out of place, or even impossible. After much discussion, we are presenting these changes, along with recommendations from the Board, to the membership. Please take a few minutes to review the proposed changes by following this [LINK](#). These changes will be voted on at the Annual Meeting.

As a by-product of Board discussions related to the Annual Meeting, the idea of an advisory committee to the President was suggested -- an idea that has been used informally in the past. Many issues the Board addresses have been around in one form or another for years. But without the involvement of past leadership, the history of prior discussions can be missed. In the coming weeks, some of our board alumni will be asked to serve on an advisory committee. Please consider serving if asked.

GATC President, Jay Dement, recently forwarded information about a Trail Skills Workshop hosted by the GATC and open to members of the BMTA. We are including an informational copy along with registration links in this month's newsletter. Consider signing up for one or more of these events to be held in September and October. Because these are virtual sessions, you need not worry about attending in a classroom full of people. Register today!

On October 2-4, the BMTA is leading an overnight work event in the Cohutta Wilderness, working to clear parts of the Benton MacKaye, the Jacks River and the Penitentiary Branch Trails. The interior portions of the JRT have not had the benefit of a work group in several years. The idea is to have at least two crosscut groups, working from both ends of the loop, clearing as much as possible in a day and a half of work. We plan to assemble on Friday evening at Dally Gap OR very early Saturday and work all day Saturday, then camp on the trail. We'll work about half a day on Sunday before returning to Dally Gap. We could use another certified sawyer or two and several more folks willing to work with ax or hand saws. Drop me a note if you have some interest. bmtabarry@gmail.com.

Till next month.....

Nominating Committee's Slate of Nominees for 2021 Board

Nominating Committee:

Bob Ruby, Chair; Clare Sullivan; Dave Ricker; Sue Ricker and ex officio member, Barry Allen

Position	Current	Years in Office	Nominee
President	Barry Allen	2	Ken Cissna
Vice President	Joy Forehand	2	Joy Forehand
Secretary	Clare Sullivan	2	Clare Sullivan
Treasurer	Margaret Meadows	3	Lydia Burns, CPA
GA Maintenance	Phil Guhl	2	Bob Cowdrick
TN/NC Maintenance	Rick Harris	1	Rick Harris
Smokies Coordinator	Larry Dumas	3	Larry Dumas
Membership	Frank Forehand	1	Frank Forehand
Publicity	Jeff DePaola	3	Cary Page
Conservation	Dave Ricker	3	Dave Ricker
Hiking Director	Ken Cissna	4	Tom Sewell
State Rep – GA	Bob Cowdrick	3	Presidential Pick
State Rep – TN/NC	Larry VanDyke	2	Presidential Pick
Immediate Past President	Tom Keene	2	Barry Allen

This year's Nominating Committee, chaired by Bob Ruby, compiled this slate of officers for your consideration. Per our Bylaws, elections will be held at the 2020 Annual Meeting, set for Vogel State Park in Blairsville, GA, on November 7. Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the meeting.

Thanks to the Nominating Committee members for their work to put this list together. And, a special thanks to all the nominees for their willingness to serve the association as officers next year.

Trail Skills Workshop September – October 2020

Normally the Trail Skills Workshop is a two day in field session designed to bring updated trail building and maintaining skills to attendees. Each session explores areas of trail work by leading experts. This year the Trail Skills Workshop will be held in three virtual sessions, similar to how the Wilderness Skills Institute was handled.

Join Dr. Jeff Marion in a discussion of trail and campsite design and management. Morgan Sommerville will present trail construction and maintenance. Sawyer Coordinator Mike Cordisco will describe the sawyer program in hope of enticing more club members into the program.

Each two hour session will be presented and recorded on a Saturday morning at 10:00AM. Participants need to register for each session to receive login credentials.

September 26	Trail Design & Management	Dr. Jeff Marion
October 10	Trail Maintenance & Constructions	Morgan Sommerville
October 17	Crosscut Sawyering	Mike Cordisco

For more information contact jay@jayDphotos.com and to register go to <https://forms.gle/oGQv5681ZaUvL7Dv7>, or aim your cell phone camera at the QR Code below.



Fontana Village Has Re-opened!

Thru hikers are welcome to stop in to get their permits. The General Store is still closed, but the Pit Stop has added re-supply items to make up for the store being closed. To use Fontana Village for mail drops, send packages to the Front Desk at Fontana Village. Mark on the package "Hold for Thru Hiker." Be sure to include your approximate arrival date.

Contact Fontana Village in advance, (800) 849-2258 – there may be a charge for this service.



Tennessee Work Trip Saturday, September 26

By Rick Harris

- ◆ **Where:** Section 16c, Sledrunner Gap to Brookshire Creek Crossing and Section 16d, Brookshire Creek to Sugar Mountain Road.
- ◆ **Contact:** Steve Cartwright, scdcmc@comcast.net
- ◆ **Time:** 8:30 AM till about 4:00 PM
- ◆ **Meeting Location:** Cherohala Skyway Visitor Center

Plan: We will meet at the CSVC for remote no-touch sign-ins and for the tailgate safety session. If we have enough folks we will brush out both sections, but if not enough folks, we will concentrate on the Brookshire Creek Section 16c. We logged out both sections recently, so we should only have to do brushing out. However, we will take along a couple of those new fancy Silky extra large hand saws. The tools of the day, however, will be swingblades and loppers, and lots of them. If we only do Section 16c, we will leave vehicles at Campsite 11 on Bald River Road and carpool to the top of the Brookshire Creek Trail. We will work our way down to the intersection with the Bald River, a distance of about 3.2 miles. Then we will walk the 1.8 miles out to our vehicles at Campsite 11. If we also work Section 16d, we will likewise leave vehicles at Campsite 11, then carpool to the Sugar Mountain crossing of the BMT and work downhill 2.4 miles to the intersection with the Brookshire Creek Trail and walk out the 1.8 miles to our vehicles at Campsite 11. Both sections are in the newly designated Upper Bald River Wilderness -- no power tools are allowed. Both routes are essentially all downhill, so not too hard. But there are three or so creek crossings. Wading shoes might be in order.

Extra Need – Shuttles: It would be great if we had folks available to shuttle us to the top then drive vehicles back to Campsite 11, saving us the long shuttle to Beaverdam Bald area and the Sugar Mountain crossing.

NOTE: Shuttles will be COVID-19 compliant -- wearing face masks with the windows open!

After Trip Fun: Afterwards, we may decide to eat supper and drink beer on the lower outdoor deck of the Iron Works Grille on the edge of the Tellico River.

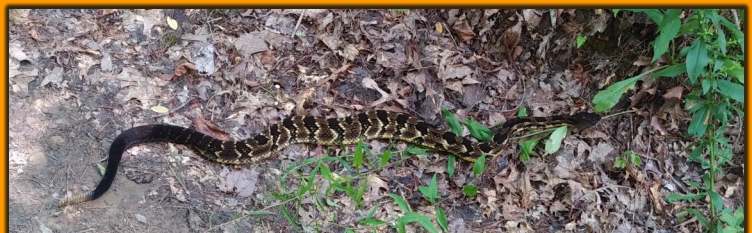
What to Bring and Wear: Long pants, boots, gloves, helmets, eye protection. Consider snake gaiters (We may have a few of these to loan). Bring a day pack with at least two liters of water, lunch, first aid kit and radio, if you have these. We need folks to bring their USFS capable radios so the teams can communicate and coordinate with each other. We have helmets, gloves, eye protection and tools for those who need them. Consider wading shoes or just plan to plow right on through in your boots. Rock hopping is possible if the water is low.

To sign up: Contact Steve Cartwright at scdcmc@comcast.net or Rick Harris at HarrisRi1947@gmail.com (423-253-6358 home, can leave message).

Gaiters and Gaiters!



The BMTA is now the proud owner of eight new sets of snake gaiters. Thank you for your support!



We Need Section Maintainers in TN/NC

by Rick Harris (TN/NC Maintenance Director)

Please consider taking on one of these sections!

Are you getting bored with your section in Georgia, or are you perhaps at the point you might want to be responsible for your own section up in the wilds of Tennessee? There are a few sections without section maintainers in the portion of the BMT from the Ocoee River to the Cherokee Skyway crossing at Beech Gap. Some of these sections are fairly easy to access and maintain and others are a real challenge. Most are in the sections closest to the Ocoee River, rather convenient to those who live down in Georgia. The available sections are listed below:

12a US 64 » Dry Pond Lead high point: 4.0 miles - Mostly Wilderness - long shuttle from top to bottom along Kimsey Hwy or US64, so best done as in and outs from either the top or the bottom to Rock Creek Trail Intersection, then return to your vehicle.

12b Dry Pond Lead » Kimsey Highway: 2.7 miles - Partly Wilderness/Partly not Wilderness - fairly easy shuttle or can be done as in and outs from any of three access points along Kimsey Hwy.

12d McFarland » White Oak Flats, FS 103: 3.9 miles - Long shuttle so best done as in and outs from either end (McFarland Rd or Lost Creek CG). Borrowing a USFS key to the gate can save a lot of hiking on this section. About half of this section is on a gated FS road and needs little maintenance.

13d Towee Creek » Wildcat Creek: 2.7 miles - Best done leaving a vehicle at Towee Creek and one at the Apalachia Powerhouse, then work from Towee Creek to Wildcat Creek or in reverse.

13e Wildcat Creek » FS 22B: 3.1 miles - Long shuttle, so best done as an in and out from either the Apalachia Powerhouse or the Coker Creek CG.

14a FS 22B » Unicoi Mt Trail (TN Hwy 68): 4.0 miles - Done best as a shuttle, working from TN68 downhill to the Coker Creek CG.

14b TN Hwy 68 » Buck Bald Road: 1.1 miles - Easy shuttle. Best to be worked from Buck Bald Rd to TN68.

14c Buck Bald Road » Unicoi Gap: 3.6 miles - Easy Shuttle. Best done from Unicoi Gap to Buck Bald Road.

15b Tate Gap » Sixmile Gap: 1.8 miles - Only way to work this section is to drive to top of Waucheesi Bald, then hike down to Six Mile Gap, then work to Tate Gap, then return to your vehicle at Waucheesi Bald.

15c Sixmile Gap » Sandy Gap: 2.1 miles - Partly Wilderness/Partly not Wilderness. Best to work this section from Sandy Gap uphill to Six Mile Gap, then return to your vehicle.

16c Sledrunner Gap » Brookshire Creek Crossing: 3.2 miles - Wilderness. Best worked from Beaverdam Bald / Sledrunner Gap downhill to the Bald River, then walk out to Bald River Rd. Long shuttle but still best to do as a shuttle to avoid the long hard uphill hike to return to your car at Beaverdam Bald.

Four of the sections are totally or partly in Wilderness, thus only primitive tools may be used in the Wilderness sections (no chainsaws, no brushcutters). You can view the sections on a topo map either in our TN/NC guidebook or look up the sections on the REI Hiking Project app on your cell phone. Or I can send you a topo map via email of any section you are interested in.

Remember that to use a chainsaw or crosscut saw, you must undergo the USFS two day certification class, which is offered once or twice a year. Section maintainers can otherwise use hand saws, gas powered brushcutters and other tools. Required PPE (helmet, eye protection and gloves) must be worn and maintainers must wear long pants and boots. PPE and tools are available from the BMTA. Just contact Rick Harris to obtain what you need for a work trip.

It is recommended that before agreeing to take on a section, you go to the BMTA website www.bmta.org and click on the Trail Maintenance icon at the top of the page. There is much info to help you learn the responsibilities of a section maintainer. If you have any questions, please contact Rick Harris at HarrisRi@aol.com or 513-260-1184 (c) or 423-253-6358 (h). Also, if you wish to take on one of these sections, contact Rick Harris.

Kids and Campfires

by Joy Forehand with Clare Sullivan. Picture courtesy of Clare Sullivan.



Ready to get away from it all? Take your family on a weekend journey into the woods. Introduce them to the peaceful beauty the forests hold. Follow a winding pathway across babbling brooks. Stand in awe of splendid waterfalls and look out on the majestic peaks of far off mountains. Then spend a nite under a canopy of glittering stars.

If you and your family enjoy the outdoors and are in shape for a moderate / moderately strenuous backpacking trek and campout, a hike on the Benton MacKaye Trail from Three Forks to the Swinging Bridge, concluding at the Hwy 60 / Little Skeenah Creek trailhead is a perfect weekend adventure for your family.

Begin at the Three Forks Trailhead. In the first mile, you'll notice bouquets of New York ferns, violets and pungent Galax. More hardwoods appear as the elevation increases, followed by Rhododendron thickets as you descend to Long Creek Falls.

As you continue northbound, you'll come to an unnamed bald with expansive views of the surrounding mountains.

"Be sure to get the kids involved," said Claire Sullivan, an avid hiker and BMTA member. "Play Match a Track' -- match animals to paw prints you find on or near the trail. Sing an old favorite '99 Bottles of Milk on the Wall' ... or ... have the kids make up their own hiking song. See who can be the first to identify birds, trees and wildflowers."

After 8.6 miles, your first day concludes at the 268-foot Swinging Bridge over the Toccoa River, one of the longest foot trail suspension bridges in the East. Several campsites are available adjacent to the bridge over the picturesque river.

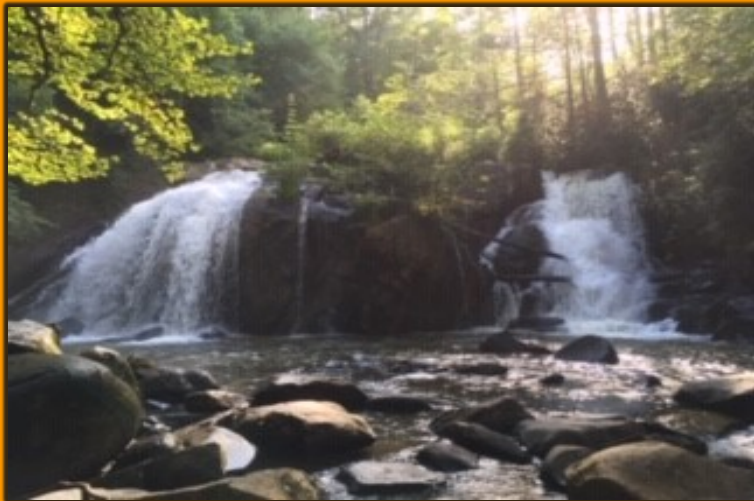
"A campfire sets the tone for a leisurely dinner," said Sullivan. "And, s'mores are a must. That's every camper's favorite dessert!"

"Then relax under a night sky filled with stars. It's a great opportunity for family time," Sullivan added. "The kids love playing 'Skunk in the Campground' (similar to 'Old Maid')."

The next morning, it's a 3.6 mile hike from the Swinging Bridge to Hwy 60 and the conclusion of your weekend adventure. On your way out, enjoy beautiful overlooks from Toonowee ("Tooni") Mountain!

About When Will This Hike Conclude?

by Steve Dennison with photos courtesy of Doug Lindberg



Sometimes I receive this question as a hike leader. With thunderstorms looming in the ever-changing forecast the inquiry had more significance as we started our hike to Turtletown Creek Falls. My initial answer was 11:00 AM (two hours for the 3.8 mile hike) but I quickly revised it to 11:30 AM since members Rod Jude and Steve Tarr and guest Doug Lindberg had never seen the falls and would likely want more time for pictures.



We concluded the hike at 11:20 AM. I told Rod, Doug and Steve to thank Ken Cissna for the 9:00 AM start because I had almost switched to an earlier 8:00 AM start to get ahead of the potential thunderstorms. All hikers drove 50 plus miles to do this hike so they already were starting earlier than normal. They concluded the hike 10 minutes before I projected. Ken not only is a great sweep and hike director, but also a good predictor as light rain arrived within 10 minutes after the hike ended.

Loop from Dyer Gap

by Tom Sewell

Wednesday, August 12, Tom and Carolyn Sewell led seven hikers in the Cohuttas on a five mile hike from Dyer Gap up USFS 64a to Flat-Top Mountain where we joined the BMT and hiked to the location of the Dovie Allison home-place. She was the teacher at the Upper Jacks River School from 1865-1895. Nearby we found a very large rhododendron tree spanning 30 feet. We then avoided a yellow jacket nest and began our hike down the BMT to Dyer Gap.

We were in luck - - the trail was just cleared by our BMT maintenance team the past weekend. This section of trail is densely shaded at this time of year but during the winter, it has clear views of the Jacks River watershed.



Yellow Fringed Orchid sighting.

Be Safe, Have Fun, and Be Done By One

by Bob Cowdrick with photos courtesy of Nelson Ashbrook and Clare Sullivan

The BMTA Georgia Workday was held on Saturday August 8. Section 8 was the focus of the workday. Twenty-seven individuals, including three guests, attended a hot and humid workday with 218 volunteer hours of effort on a sunny Saturday that ended in a summer downpour.

Team 1 helped spread gravel at Bushy Head Gap, then brushed and cut out trees on Section A. Team 2 led the gravel effort, then cut and brushed Section B. Team 3, with a combined 377 years of age, cut 18 trees and brushed miles on Sections C-D-E. Team 4 conquered the impossible and won by brushing and retreading Sections F-G-H.

Saturday's effort on Section 8 was exemplary. Two hikers passed us on Section 8a and thanked us for all the efforts the BMTA members and guests do to support the trail. A special thank you to our guests, Laura Petersen, Connor Bayliss and Stephanie Hodgins (who is now a member). We hope you had a fun time and we all appreciate your efforts.

Our goal of the day was "Be Safe, Have Fun, and Be Done By One". We accomplished our goal, with only two bee stings, a small tumble and some sore muscles. Well done!



So, you say there is a trail here?



Something for everyone!

Watch for the emails about the next GA Workday on

Continued next page



Team 2 all smiles!



Team 4 included "Date Day" for some.



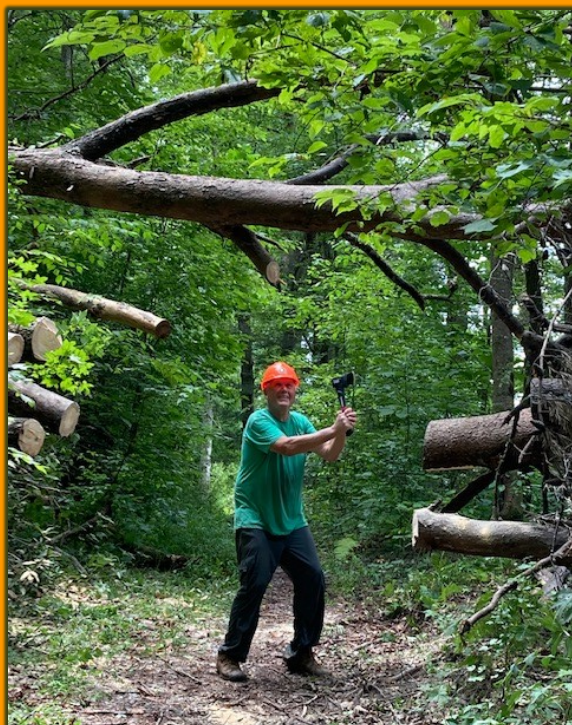
Hmm. Team 3 looks a little "Sketchy." "Watch out Ma, thar's wild men in the woods!"

Mission Accomplished!!

Pictures courtesy of Dave and Sue Ricker



There in the deep lay the behemoth. The behemoth accepted sacrifices and rituals to allow safe passage.



Dave, I think you're going to need "a bigger ax."



Yay! Thumbs up!

Old Copper Road Trail

by Ken Cissna with photos courtesy of Tom Atcheson

Several more timid, prospective hikers backed out due to the weather forecast, but we moved the starting time up an hour and the four that hiked on Friday, August 14 were rewarded with *Sunshine!* before we were done. No rain, no storms. Great hike!

This trail was once part of a route built in 1853 to connect the copper mines in the Copper Basin to the railroad in Cleveland, Tennessee. It took two years to build. Oxen and mules were used to haul the copper. It took two days to complete the journey. Today we have this section preserved for hiking and biking along the Ocoee.

The trail is lovely—a gentle 2.3 miles along the Ocoee River starting from the White Water Center. It's slightly uphill going out and downhill coming back, but the hiker rarely notices any change of elevation. And the music of the river is always within range. Restrooms at the turn around were much appreciated.

We saw only one couple enjoying the trail and a few swimmers enjoying the Blue Hole. Hikers included Sharon and Tom Atcheson, hike leader Ken Cissna, and Susan Klevansky.



Ken Cissna Forecasts Weather Better Than Bill Murray

by Steve Dennison with photos courtesy of Nancy Dennison



Dwarfed by the massive Gennett Poplar tree.



Up the Creek but no need to paddle, yet!



Doll's Eye peeks out from the forest.

Six members planned to do the Bear Creek Loop Trail hike but then the weather forecast worsened overnight and two members opted out.

Ken indicated the Pinhoti Trail provided a cut-through route considerably reducing the length of the seven mile hike if bad weather hit. Hike leader Steve Dennison asked Ken if he advised us to take the shorter version. Ken summoned his best Carl Spackler (aka Bill Murray in Caddyshack) then looked up in the sky and noted that the sky was lightening up. Bill Murray agreed with the Catholic priest to play though the lightning storm.

We never heard a rumble of thunder or saw a streak of lightning. A brief 15 minute gentle shower didn't interfere with our hike. Yes, Ken did forecast the weather better than Bill Murray.

Recent rains have increased from the usual one stream crossing at the hike's end to four significant water crossings today.

The Gennett Poplar tree (the second largest living tree in Georgia) is a highlight of this trail and casual hikers can hike to the tree and then reverse course for a shorter two mile trip with a shallow water crossing.

BMTA Tennessee August 22 Work Trip

by Rick Harris

Eleven maintainers came out on this cool August day to finish what was started last month in the Heart of Darkness, that dark and forbidding, hard to access section along the state line between TN and NC from Sandy Gap to Sledrunner Gap. Last month the trail was brushed out from Sandy Gap to Round Top. The weather cooperated. Even though the forecast was for a high chance of afternoon thundershowers, we only had a few drops fall on us, not enough to require raingear.

This month six folks with brushcutters (Rick and Brenda Harris, Ken and Phyllis Jones, Rick Parks and David Blount) brushed out the trail from Sledrunner Gap to Round Top, a distance of 3.2 miles. The six started from Beaverdam Bald, hiked the half mile down to Sledrunner Gap and began working south on the trail. The BMT was very overgrown with briars in about half of this section requiring a lot of slow work to clear the corridor. This group finished after 3:00 PM then had to hike mostly uphill back to the vehicles. They made it back to the vehicles at 6:00 PM and enjoyed beers, candy and Gatorade. The brushcutters hiked 6.8 miles with an elevation rise of about 1600 feet. Needless to say, the crew was very tired upon returning to the vehicles. But the job was successfully completed!

The saw crew (Barry Allen, Bob Cowdrick, Shane Morrison and Gilbert Treadwell) were driven to Beaverdam Bald by Phil Guhl. Phil then brushed out the half mile from the top of Beaverdam Bald down to Sledrunner Gap, then he drove back to Sandy Gap to pick up the sawyers at the end of the day. The sawyers cleared 21 trees off the trail, mostly on the section from Round Top to Sandy Gap. Once again, Barry proved his ability to charm a rattlesnake into not biting him. This time it was at Sandy Gap, waiting for them to return. I guess the snake wanted a second chance. Last month, Barry almost stepped on a timber rattler while brushcutting.



Forest fun, thick and deep!



Here, snaky, snaky. Come to Daddy.

BMTA Corporate Members

The Benton MacKaye Trail Association is grateful for the help and support provided by our Corporate Members. When you visit one of these businesses, please identify yourself as a BMTA member and be sure to thank them for their support!

ALL CORPORATE MEMBERS ARE OPEN FOR BUSINESS NOW!



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THE DUCKTOWN COPPER INN
<https://www.theducktowncopperinn.com/location>



BMTA's 2020 Annual Meeting

The Lake Pavilion at Vogel State Park

Blairsville, Georgia
November 7, 2020

Annual Meeting Hikes

Wonderful Waterfalls

Under 3 miles, easy.

This short hike involves several waterfalls, two at DeSoto State Park and another at Helton Creek—both locations are just a short drive from Vogel.

Wagon Train Trail—Brass Town Bald

About 4 miles, easy to moderate.

Out to the second overlook, from which position you can look back at Brasstown Bald and tower.

Bear Hair Trail

About 4 miles, moderate difficulty.

This hike departs from the parking lot adjacent to the Vogel Ranger Station. Requires more change of elevation (up and down) than hikes #A and #B. View of Vogel State Park's Lake Trahlyta.

Swinging Bridge

5 miles, moderate.

From the parking lot on FS 816, hike up Toonowee Mtn to summit and beyond to where the trail starts down the other side. Then back and down to the Swinging Bridge over the Toccoa River, and back to cars.

Tesnatee Gap to Wolf Laurel Top

4.6 miles, moderate to strenuous.

Great hike with multiple vistas.

Hikes to be governed by

[BMTA's COVID-19 Hiking Guidelines](#)

Social Distancing / No Shuttles / Hikes Limited to 10 Hikers

More details to come in the October Newsletter!

Short Legs, Long Legs and Giant Mushrooms

by Steve Dennison with photos courtesy of Tom Johnson

Four BMTA members hiked six miles of trails from the Wildcat Campground near Steve Tate Road between Ellijay, Jasper and Dawsonville. The green-blazed Wildcat Trail follows scenic Wildcat Creek for a couple of miles. We decided to climb up a hill rather than crossing a bridge and then checked out the water level of a stream crossing. Recent rains have swollen the creek there. Ken Cissna said he could cross the creek. I said my legs were much shorter, the trail on the other side was steep and I just wanted to scout it out. Actually I was thinking that the rocks looked very wet and slick and I didn't want to set a bad example as hike leader by falling into the creek. Been there, done that once before. A large fallen tree had posed a significant challenge when I hiked to that stream crossing several months earlier. The tree had been cut and moved off the trail. Mountain Stewards maintains the trails which were in very good shape.

We reversed course back to the bridge where the orange-blazed Turner Trail starts. We turned right onto the steep red-blazed Rocky Ford Trail and enjoyed a snack near where the Rocky Ford Falls cascade for more than 100 yards and even crossed the namesake trail itself. Hiker Beth Rothermel spotted a cranefly orchid flower.



We headed back to Turner Trail and Beth saw a huge orange mushroom and headed back to the campground. More folks camp than hike there. That day there were no campers and no other hikers.

Our two one-mile side trips added two miles to the four-mile Wildcat-Turner Loop. This is a very scenic trail in a Georgia Wildlife Management Area. The trail system continues on the other side of the significant stream crossing with two steep trails that go up to Monument Road near Mount Oglethorpe, the original southern terminus of the Appalachian Trail. A beautiful waterfall and cascades are highlights of the western side of the trail system.

Upcoming Hikes and Work Trips

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. Some, but not all, of our hikes are “dog friendly.” Although more hikes are in Georgia than the other states, you will find hikes in all three BMT states: Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee.

These, however, are not normal times. Because hiking in the out-of-doors is good for one’s mental and physical health, we encourage BMTA members and others to continue hiking as much as possible during this national health crisis *and to do so safely*. To that end, we are continuing our hiking program and welcome people to hike with us. In the interests of safety, we have instituted some modifications that you need to know about:

1. **Only hikes that do not require shuttles are allowed** under the auspices of BMTA.
2. All hikers must drive to the meeting place and trailhead in their own cars -- no carpooling except among family members.
3. Any potential hiker who is feeling ill, has traveled within the past 14 days to a location with a significant number of cases of the novel corona virus (COVID-19) or has been exposed within the past 14 days to a person who has been confirmed as or is even suspected of having COVID-19 must not come on a hike.
4. All hikes are limited to 10 participants —hike leaders may impose even lower limits.
5. Before, during and after a hike, participants must maintain an appropriate social distance from one another (an absolute minimum of six feet—but ten, fifteen or twenty is much better).

We have had to make more adjustments than usual to our hike schedule—dropping some hikes, substituting others, revising hikes to avoid shuttles, etc. Please forgive the inconvenience.

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@bmtamail.org.

The hikes for the next couple of months are listed below. We’re completing the summer/water hikes and moving into the fall/leaf hike season so you’ll find plenty to enjoy in the hikes below. 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.

September

September 10 (Thursday) BMT: Mud Gap to Whigg Meadow.

5.8 miles, moderate. In recent years, we have seen professional birders catching, measuring and banding birds at Whigg Meadow in September. We hope they are there again this year.

Hike leader Tom Sewell. For more information, contact hikeleader@bmtamail.org.

September 11 (Friday) Stanley Gap Trail from Fall Branch Falls to where Stanley Gap and BMT diverge, and back. About 6 miles, moderate.

Hike Leader Steve Dennison. For more information, contact hikeleader@bmtamail.org.



September 12 (Saturday) **GA Work Trip** Section 9.
To RSVP contact Phil Guhl, bmtaphil@gmail.com.

September 16 (Wednesday) Emery Creek. **BMTA Members Only**.

5 miles, moderate. The trail for this in-and-out hike is fairly easy, but 26 stream crossings (a number up to your ankles and two around your knees) and a section of potentially slippery rock toward the beginning and again at the end make it more difficult than it otherwise would be. Holly and Emery Creeks, two lovely waterfalls and a beautiful trail make it worth the trouble.

Hike leader: Ken Cissna. For more information, contact hikeleader@bmtamail.org.

September 22 (Tuesday) Oglethorpe Mountain Trails.
3 miles, easy.

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

September 25 (Friday) BMT: Highway 515 to Weaver Creek and return. **DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE** (adult humans may bring a leashed dog) 5 miles, easy. Mostly along dirt roads. Two “rock hopping” stream crossings that could get your feet wet depending on stream levels and recent rainfall.

Hike leader Ken Cissna. For more information, contact hikeleader@bmtamail.org.



September 26 (Saturday) **TN/NC Work Trip** Section 16e – Loss Creek to Coker Creek CS.

To RSVP contact Crew Leader Steve Cartwright, scdcme@comcast.net.

September 28 (Monday) Rock Town Trail (near Lafayette, GA in Wilderness Management Area).
4.2 miles, moderate. Big boulders are pretty neat.

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

October

October 3 (Saturday) Bob Bald. **DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE** (adult humans may bring a leashed dog).
8 miles, moderate.

Hike leaders: Rick and Brenda Harris. For more information, contact harrisri@aol.com.

October 9 (Friday) BMT: John Muir Trail to the Narrows.

5 miles, moderate.

We'll start with a beautiful view from the swinging bridge that crosses the Hiwassee River at the Appalachia Powerhouse. The hike will be to a treasure, The Narrows, a deep narrow gorge through which the old riverbed flows. It's full of fascinating rock formations and Ruth's Golden Asters (in the fall). You'll want to drop your pack and explore! Be prepared for water crossings. Hiking sticks recommended. Bring snack/lunch and water.

Hike Leader: Clare Sullivan. For more information, contact hikeleader@bmtamail.org.

**October 10 (Saturday) GA Work Trip Section 10.**

To RSVP contact Phil Guhl, bmtaphil@gmail.com.

October 12 (Monday) AT: Tesnatee Gap to Levelland Mountain and return.

7.6 miles, moderate with some steep climbing. Spectacular views from Cowrock, Wolf Laurel Top and Levelland Mountains.

Hike Leader Steve Dennison. For more information, contact hikeleader@bmtamail.org.

October 16 (Friday) 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@bmtamail.org.

October 17 (Saturday) Hangover. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog).

7 miles, difficult.

Hike leaders Rick and Brenda Harris. For more information, contact harrisri@aol.com.

**October 24 (Saturday) TN/NC Work Trip Section 17c-d Whigg Meadow to Beech Gap.**

To RSVP contact Rick Harris harrisri@aol.com.

October 26 (Monday) Four Season Hike Series – Fall: BMT - Bushy Head Gap to Hudson Gap. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog).

4 miles, moderate. We're going to offer this relatively short and fairly easy hike during each season for the next year. Come out and see fall colors, great views in winter, wild flowers in spring and who knows—just get hot in the summer.

Hike leader: Ken Cissna. For more information, contact hikeleader@bmtamail.org

The deadline for the October Newsletter is Wednesday, November 11. Thank you!