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BMTA Headquarters



VOLUME 38, ISSUE 5

MAY 2021

Spring is in the Air!

Time to Get Out and Hike the BMT!

It goes without saying that spring fever hits every year, and but probably even more so this year. Given the pandemic lockdowns, everyone's itching to get outdoors to enjoy the colorful spring flowers ... and ... *some freedom!* What better way to do that than a hike on the BMT where there's a hike for everyone! To learn more about each hike, use the links below.



In Georgia

Captivating waterfalls top the list of easy hikes for family outings. Only one-mile round trip, [Fall Branch Falls](#) is an enchanting waterfall with the water surging down a high, rock cliff. The glistening white water cascading down [Long Creek Falls](#) (two miles round trip) provides a stunning contrast to the emerald-green Rhododendron that surround it.

The iconic [Swinging Bridge](#) can be an easy half-mile round trip jaunt ... or ... an approximately seven-mile in-and-out moderately strenuous trek. Completed in 1977, the 268' suspension bridge sits high above the Toccoa River. It's a great place for a picnic lunch. But, beware, the kids love to make the bridge swing as they cross it!

Continued next page

In Tennessee

An easy 5.4-mile hike along the [Lost Creek Limestone Gorge](#) is perfect for mom, dad and the kids. Perhaps one of the most beautiful hikes on the BMT, the trail follows an old roadbed much of the way. In summer, everyone will enjoy splashing in the creek to cool off with gentle waterfalls nearby.

The moderate 3.2-mile hike to [Whigg Meadow](#) is a “must do” for families. A wide-open meadow with panoramic views of the surrounding mountains is the perfect venue for a picnic lunch.

In North Carolina

For backpackers, the [Tunnel to Nowhere to Smokemont](#) offers a 26.5-mile easy/moderate hike. The quarter-mile long tunnel is a remnant of a once-planned road to Deals Gap. It now serves as a gateway for hikers on the BMT. You’ll trek past a huge boulder field, fragrant pine forest and the now deserted community of Solola Valley.

The five-mile climb from Fontana Village to Lookout Rock is strenuous, but well worth it. The view from Lookout Rock is exquisite. Depending upon the season, you’ll see a wide array of beautiful wildflowers and ferns. The trailhead for the BMT to Lookout Rock begins just across from the entrance to Fontana Village Lodge.

BMT/AT Loop

This 521-mile easy-to-strenuous journey is not for the faint of heart. The southern termini of both the AT and the BMT are on Springer Mountain in Georgia. The lopsided figure eight is formed by the Benton MacKaye Trail and Appalachian Trail between their southern termini at Springer Mountain and the northern terminus of the Benton MacKaye Trail at Baxter Creek Trailhead in the Big Creek Campground, where the Appalachian Trail leaves the Smokies. Between these points, the Benton MacKaye Trail covers 287 miles while the Appalachian Trail covers 234 miles.

A few **reminders** before you go. Remember, social distancing still is important, even when outdoors. Be courteous to other hikers. So hikers don’t lose that all important momentum, yield to those going uphill. If on a trail shared with horses or mountain bikes, get off the trail on the downhill side of the trail and wait quietly while they pass.

Help us keep the trail safe and open for all to enjoy. Put bmtacontact@bmtaemail.org in your address book. BMTA volunteers appreciate being advised of problems on the trail. If you see a problem (blowdown, brush encroachment, tread issues, bridge damaged or out, etc.), email the location and a description of the problem. If possible, include a picture and GPS points. This is especially important if a recent event, say a large group of blowdowns, is totally blocking the trail.

One recent blowdown removal deserves a special thank you! In fact, they set a record. A large blowdown was reported on Section 2d. The blowdown was removed in less than 24 hours! Thank you to Tom and Carolyn Sewell, Gilbert Treadwell and Ken Cissna.

Kudos to Hike Leader Clare Sullivan whose Caney Creek Hike proved so popular it had to be split into three hikes! Sullivan also introduced a brand-new hike to the Southern Side of the Narrows to see the abandoned community of McFarland.

Congratulations to BMT Thru Hikers Sarah Sundstrom who came all the way from Fairbanks, Alaska, and Taylor Peter-Bibb who journeyed from Kaneohe, HI, to hike the BMT!



Celebrate BMTA's 40th Anniversary!

2021 BMTA Annual Meeting & Hike Fest Nov. 11 – 14

Unicoi State Park & Lodge, Helen, Georgia

Four Days of Great Hikes!

HELEN & HARDEMAN FARM

3 Miles / Easy / Suzy Downing
90 minute Hardeman Farm tour. Cost \$7-12 each.

DUKE'S CREEK FALLS

2 miles round trip / Lots of stairs / Mike Pilvinsky
Exquisite falls.

UNICOI LAKE TRAIL

2.5 miles / Easy / Carolyn Sewell
Gentle, lakeside trail thru the forest & across a dam.

UNICOI TO HELEN, GA

LUNCH AT HOFER'S GERMAN RESTAURANT
6 miles / Easy / Evelin & Doug Yarns
After the hike & lunch, shop downtown Helen!

HIGH SHOALS FALLS

2.5 miles / Moderate / Larry Jarkovsky
Gorgeous waterfalls!

HORSE TROUGH FALLS

1 mile / Moderate / Larry Jarkovsky
Magnificent waterfall.

RAVEN CLIFF FALLS

5 miles / Moderate/ Bill Witherspoon
Geology tour.

INDIAN GRAVE GAP TO TRAY MOUNTAIN AND BACK

5 miles / Moderate / Jess Riddle
Focus will be on Georgia Forest Watch environmental issues & learn about tree identifications.

BRASSTOWN BALD

4.2-miles / Moderate / George Owen
Highlights include views from the Observation Deck, a hike on the upper portion of the Wagon Train Trail, concluding with a great view from the Brasstown Tower.

SMITH CREEK TRAIL FROM UNICOI STATE PARK TO ANNA RUBY FALLS

5-miles / moderate-strenuous / Brenda & Rick Harris
Stunning double waterfalls!

SMITHGALL WOODS STATE PARK CHUNANEE FALLS TRAIL

6.8 miles / Moderate / Barry Allen
Awesome waterfall!

CHATTAHOOCHEE GAP VIA THE JACKS KNOB TRAIL (base of Brasstown Bald Hwy 180)

5.3 miles / Moderate - Strenuous / Clayton Webster
Follow a peaceful forested pathway.

HOGPEN GAP ON THE RICHARD RUSSELL HWY TO SHEEP ROCK ON THE AT AND RETURN

7.5- miles / Moderate / Carolyn & Tom Sewell
1,100' elevation change.

TESTNATEE GAP TO LEVELLAND MT. ON THE AT AND RETURN

7.6 miles / Jess Riddle
Spectacular views from Cowrock, Wolf Laurel Top & Levelland mountains. Focus will be on Georgia Forest environmental issues and introduce you to some tree identifications.

BMT SWINGING BRIDGE

7 miles / Moderate / George Owen
Iconic 268' Swinging Bridge over the scenic Toccoa River.

YONAH MOUNTAIN TRAIL

5 miles / Strenuous / Mike Pilvinsky
Climb of some 1,700 ft. features awesome views from atop the rugged rock-hewn summit trail portions.

For reservations call 800-573-9659.

To receive your discount, use Code 99529!

Mention the Benton MacKaye Trail Association!

A Bear History

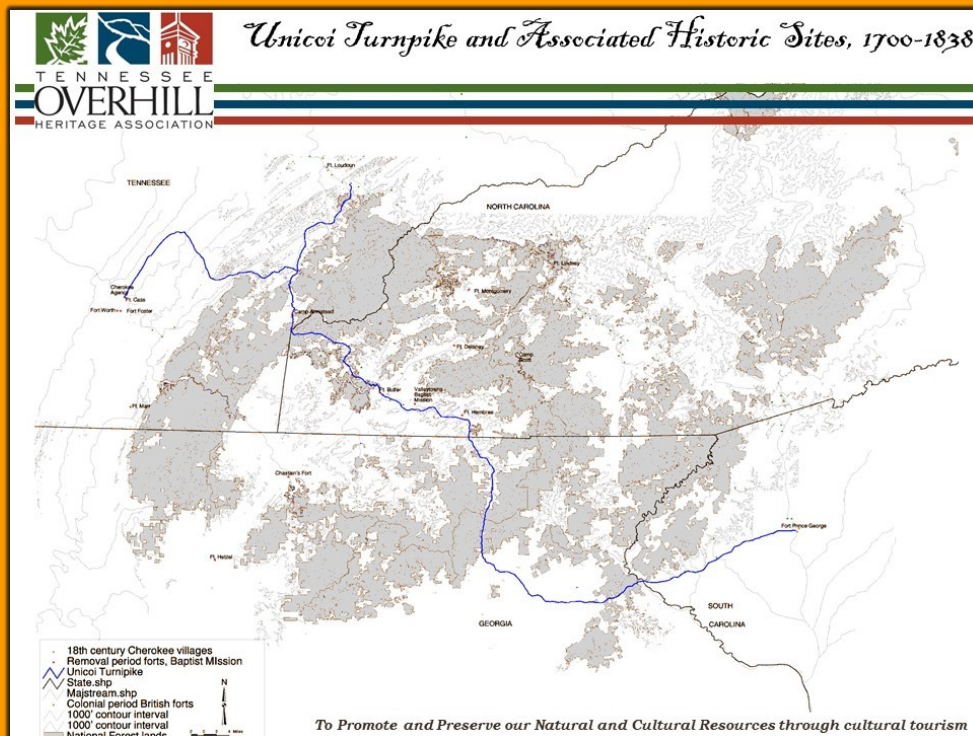
by Gerald D. Hodge, Jr.

The Appalachia Georgia Mountains have changed significantly for the better in many ways since I first left in 1984 to serve in the U.S. Army. One of the ways it has improved is that our Black Bear population has started to stabilize and recover from four human-caused devastations over the past 290 years. Globalization would be a common thread in three of these devastations.

There have been four major threats to the American Black Bear since the European Colonization of North America. They were the Colonial Fur Trade (1699-1772), deforestation and habitat loss from commercial logging (1880-1930), the American Chestnut blight (1904-Present) and unregulated hunting (Colonization-1979).

Most people are familiar with the five plagues that devastated the European human population from 541–1720, but few are aware of the three panzootics that devastated Europe's cattle herds between 1709-1786. As a result, Great Britain banned European imports of cattle from the European continent. However, it did not lessen the demand for leather goods. They looked to the colonies to meet the demand.

In Georgia, the Cherokee and Creek tribes traded with colonial fur traders for manufactured European made goods and rum. The furs were then shipped from Augusta to Savannah and Charleston for shipment to Great Britain. However, white encroachment beyond the Savannah River became so devastating that the Upper Creek Chief Mortar told the Council at Savannah in April 1763 that the killing of the buffalo, deer and bear were so great that they could not feed their women and children. This friction and a series of native land cessions would not stop until the "Five Civilized Tribes" were forced west of the Mississippi River in the 1830's.



Fort Chastain is now in Lake Blue Ridge. Fort Hetzel was in the vicinity of Georgia Highway 515, 1st Avenue, and Mulberry Street. There is a historical marble interpretation marker at that intersection.

Map credit: Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association (TOHA).

In the late 18th and early 19th Century, large tracts of land were cleared in East Tennessee, Western North Carolina, and Appalachia Georgia for farmland. Large quantities of wood were needed to construct homes, infrastructure, fuel for heating and steam engines.

Copper ore mining in the Copper Basin began in 1850 and by 1861, 23,000 acres had been consumed as part of the smelting process or destroyed by acid rain. By 1876, wood had to be floated down the Toccoa River from Fannin County so smelting could continue. The State of Georgia began filing lawsuits in 1885 to recoup losses of timber and food crops.

Continued next page

By the late 1800's, the use of Shay steam engines, skidders and log cranes allowed for large scale commercial logging in more remote, mountainous areas. The national demand for lumber was met, in part, because of the L&N Railroad being able to transport the lumber out of the region. As a result, the Black Bear's habitat, and that of all wildlife in North Georgia was further depleted.



Shay Engine #2147, built in Lima, Ohio in 1909 for the Badcock Lumber Company in Tellico Plains, Tennessee and then used by the Little River Lumber Company, 1932-1935. Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum, Townsend, Tennessee.

Photo by Gerald D. Hodge, Jr.

The *Weeks Act of 1911* allowed the Federal government to purchase privately owned land so it could be preserved. The Pisgah Forest in Western North Carolina in 1916, the Nantahala in Southwestern North Carolina in 1920 and the Cherokee in Tennessee in 1920 and purchases of 31,000 acres of land in Gilmer, Fannin, Union and Lumpkin Counties in 1911 became part of the Cherokee National Forest in 1920.

The American Chestnut was the primary hard mast food source for the bears. A fungal disease (*Cryphonectria parasitica*) was introduced into North America from East and Southeast Asia via the Japanese Chestnut trees in 1904. It is estimated that between three and four billion American Chestnut trees were destroyed by 1950.

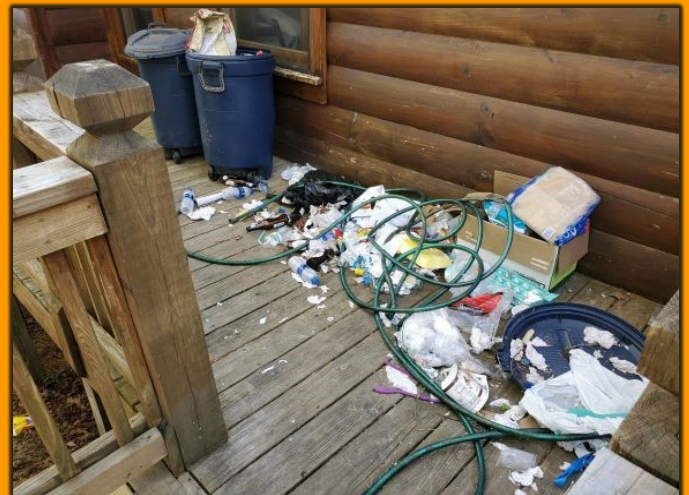
The State of Georgia did not regulate the hunting of Black Bears until 1979. Early settlers considered them a threat to both themselves, crops and livestock. By the 1920's, Black Bear hunting had been restricted. The population was estimated to be only 50 animals in North Georgia. Today, the population is estimated to be over 3,000 in North Georgia alone and is well on its way to recovery.

The habitat threats today very closely mirror those of the past - overdevelopment, human encroachment, food supply, poaching and illegal international wildlife trafficking. The potential for human-bear conflict is not going away so we must learn from our past to meet the challenge and threat of the present to secure the American Black Bear's future.



Black Bear yearling traveling at night [good bear behavior] on an old section of the Benton MacKaye Trail, Cherry Log, Georgia.

Photo by Gerald D. Hodge, Jr.



Human-Bear Conflict. Bear accesses improperly stored trash within 200 meters of the Benton-MacKaye Trail, Cherry Log Mountain, Georgia.

Photo by Gerald D. Hodge, Jr.

“How High’s the Water Mama?”

by Bob Cowdrick

On March 30, excessive rains caused flooding at the headquarters of the BMTA. On April 3, maintainers did a successful cleanup. Thank you!!!!



Join Now!

Use this link to become a BMTA member:

Membership

A Cheery Hike in Cherry Log

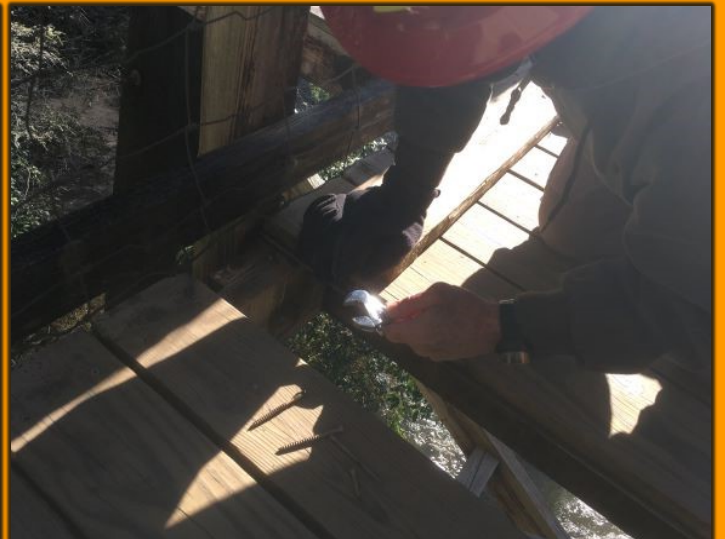
by Martha Fowler

Hike Leader Martha Fowler led a moderate four-mile hike on the Benton McKay Trail on March 30. We started at the Craddock Center on Highway 515 and hiked through the Cherry Log Community to the Indian Rock Shelter. A few of us hiked a little further to the Covered Bridge and Granny Lake. Hikers were: Darcy Douglas, Paul Black, Jerry and Sara Bland, Steve and Pat Mullen, Penny Strickland, Howard Baggett, Roberta and David Byrum and Mike Pilvinsky.



Nuts & Bolts Keeping The Swinging Bridge Swinging!

by Bob Cowdrick



BMTA Wins Spring Opener

by Bob Cowdrick

The **Braves** won their spring opener 8-1 against the Phillies.
The **BMTA** won their spring opener 1-0 against the Weather Predictors.

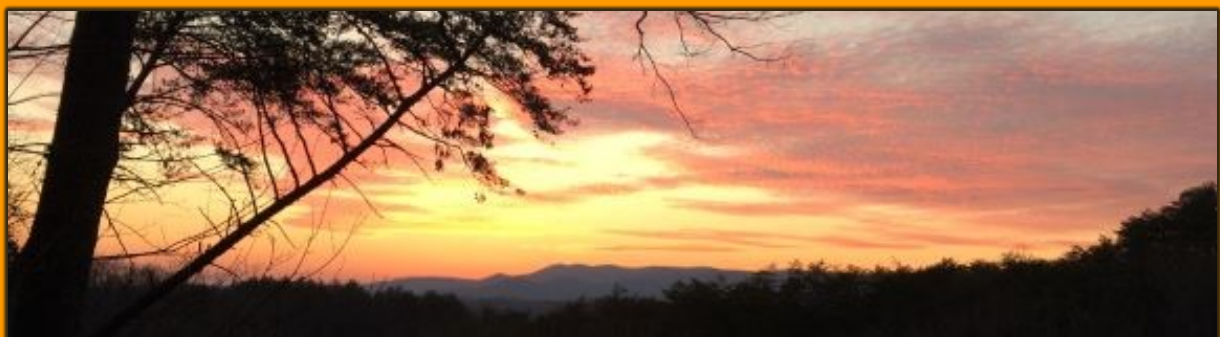
The Weather Predictors were calling for rain Friday and Saturday with severe storms possible. That was making me, and possibly you also, very nervous.

We prevailed! The showers held off for most of the trail work and all of you made it happen. Sections 4a and 4b got a "Spring Cleaning" and are now ready for hikers to enjoy the trail.

The numbers were ...

- ◆ 98 Volunteer hours of effort
- ◆ 18 Attendees
- ◆ 32 Water diversions completed
- ◆ 6 Blowdowns removed
- ◆ 4 Awesome crew leaders (Janie, David, Patrick and Barry)
- ◆ 3 New members attending (hope you enjoyed the day Greg, David and Shelly)
- ◆ 1 Guest (who travelled the farthest – come join us again Terry)
- ◆ 0 Injuries

Thanks again to all of you for your time and efforts today. We couldn't do it without your help!



Five Star Ratings *****

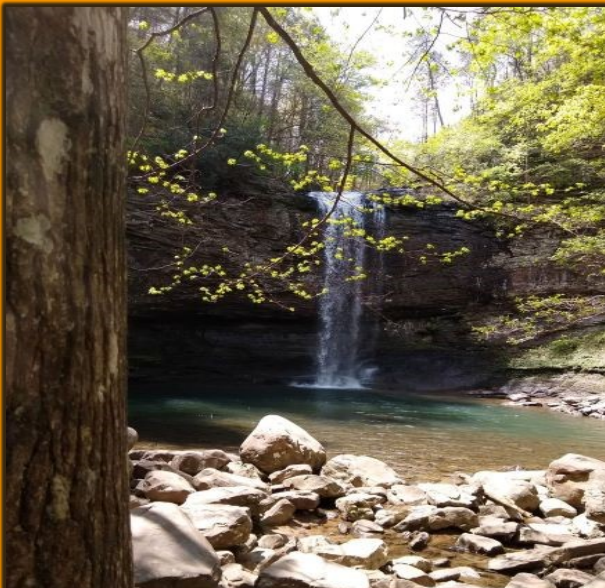
by Bob Cowdrick

Five Star Ratings are normally reserved for eBay Sellers, Amazon Marketplace Sellers, Twitter Posters, etc., that have exceeded expectations. But the four of you, Gilbert Treadwell, Ken Cissna, Tom and Carolyn Sewell, deserve a Five Star Rating ***** for clearing these blowdowns. The BMT Section 2d hikers appreciate your work and so do I. Well done!!

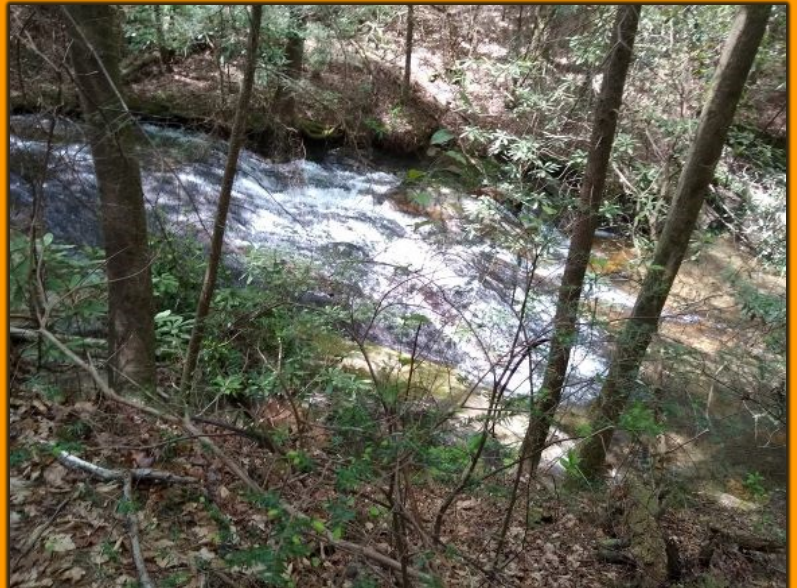


Cloudland Canyon and Wildcat Creek

Courtesy of Steve Dennison



Hemlock Falls delight at Cloudland Canyon!

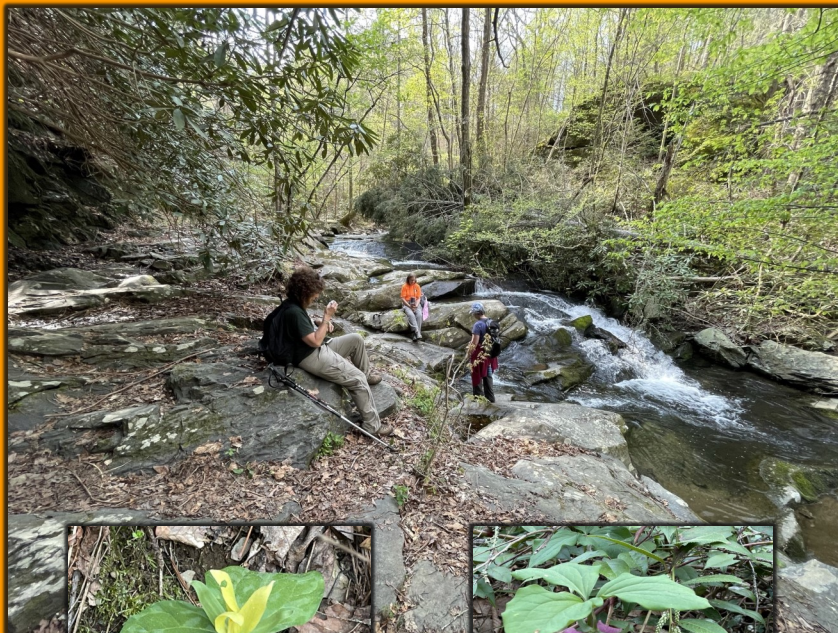


Rocky Cascades are wild at Wildcat Creek!

Going on Goforth

by Martha Fowler

We enjoyed lots of wildflowers and a few blowdowns on our hike to Goforth Creek on April 13. We followed the creek to a pretty waterfall and back for a total of about three easy miles. Hikers were Martha Fowler, Sue Ford, Paul McCord, Nancy Sauls and Kathy Williams.



Hey Boe Rudder!



Boe Rudder maintains the shortest section on the BMT -- from Big Bend » Towee Creek, 13b. Because of a steep cliff section where the tread has weathered down to just nine inches -- with a 30' drop off on the downhill side -- the section is considered one of the most dangerous on the BMT. Hopefully the FS will approve steps as the final remedy for the treacherous footing.

Rudder's background is in the world of finance and property management, but his passion in life became hiking and maintaining the trails that wind through the hills of Tennessee.

Like many of us he started out camping with the Scouts and hiking nearby trails.

"In those days, most of the trails were old logging roads and we didn't really know where we were going," said Rudder. "One of my favorite hiking spots was Gee Creek ... that's 'gee' as in the way to tell a mule to turn right." Gee Creek later became the first "restrictive property" in Tennessee -- the Gee Creek Wilderness.

Later, Rudder started section-hiking the AT, but in the vicinity of Wesser Bald, the trail lost its allure. He returned to hiking the local trails in the Cherokee National Forest. His work soon required him to travel, leaving no time for hiking.

When he returned to the trail, his first foray back to the AT left him disenchanted with the overcrowded trail. He switched to the BMT. He enjoyed the solitude as well as the challenging terrain. Barry Allen would later describe the challenging terrain to Rudder this way, 'When laying out the trail, they would look at the mountain, find the steepest way up and put the trail there.'

Rudder's love for the beautiful Tennessee trails led him to join the Cherokee Hiking and Chattanooga Hiking clubs.

"I also became a member of the Soddy Daisy Chapter of Tennessee Trails," said Rudder. "A Florida couple originally owned over 2,000 acres in what had been an old coal mining area. The parcel was full of wonderful hiking trails. The couple eventually donated the land to a city for a park. It later became the North Chickamauga Scenic Section of the Cumberland Trail, and is now overseen by the Soddy Daisy Chapter."

Rudder's interest in trail maintenance was peaked when he became involved with another offshoot of Tennessee Trails, the Cumberland Trail. When completed, it will be the longest linear trail in Tennessee.

Rudder received his education in trail construction and trail maintenance while working with the Cumberland Trail. Stonework is his forte. Some of his work can be seen on the BMT's Towee Creek section.

Maintaining the Cumberland Trail for the FS comes with rules and regulations -- all very specific, spelled out in a booklet. Rudder and a co-worker were assigned the task of moving a 400-lb. rock 15' to the trail to prevent washouts. They thought they had the rock positioned perfectly ... until the supervising agent took measurements. The agent said, "The angle of the rock is five-degrees and I need a seven-degree angle so the water will run off properly. Change it."

Continued next page

When it comes to work trips, Rudder has been known to provide some impromptu comic relief.

“One hot day, we were coming in from working in the BMT’s Heart of Darkness. We got to the creek just before the parking area. There was a bridge 100’ or so away, but I was too tired. All I had to do was jump the two-foot creek. Instead, I landed in four feet of cold water, but oh boy, did that water feel good!”

Some of his favorite hikes on the BMT were with former BMTA President Betty Petty who encouraged him to come out and maintain the BMT. He joined BMTA in 2013 and has become a regular on Tennessee work trips.

He also enjoys hiking and maintaining trail with Rick Harris. On one hike, the two were going down steep switchbacks on the Oswald Dome Trail. Harris had attached his dog, Jake, to his belt. Jake apparently thought it would be more efficient if he just cut straight down the hill to the next switchback. It goes without saying that Harris went flying down the hill with him.

The 78-year-old Rudder has slowed down some -- most of his work now is on the BMT. When needed he works on the Cumberland Trail and on land managed by the Tennessee River Gorge Trust and the LuLu Lake Land Trust. He still enjoys introducing people to overnight backpacking treks.

“I like to take them from Lost Creek to Towee Creek. In this area, they get a taste of almost everything they’ll encounter on a backpacking trip,” said Rudder.

As to BMTA Maintenance, Rudder is pleased to see BMTA beginning to take on responsibilities for some of the access trails. He hopes one day they’ll add the rest of the John Muir Trail where it separates from the BMT at the highway as well as the Cow Camp Lead Trail.

Hidden Beauties of Wildcat Creek

Courtesy of Steve Dennison



The Rope is Calling, The Rope is Calling

by Clare Sullivan

In December, 2020, Larry Jarkovsky was on a BMTA hike to The Narrows on the Hiwassee River where he spotted an enticing rope swing across the river. Larry went exploring the following week and found access to the rope swing from the south side of the Hiwassee. The rope swing was two miles downriver from the extinct town of McFarland.

McFarland was established in 1895. It served as section headquarters for the Old-Line Railroad. There were a series of switchbacks nearby that required frequent maintenance. McFarland had a general store, post office and a two-story hotel. The hotel was often filled with Forest Service employees working the newly created Cherokee National Forest. Later, McFarland was abandoned.

We were surprised to meet five railroad vehicles replacing railroad ties. They were surprised to see us too! During our day of exploration, we saw the remains of the cement company that provided cement for the seven-mile flume through the mountains from the Appalachia Dam to the powerhouse in Reliance. Near the powerhouse we viewed remains of Smith Creek Village that housed the flume and powerhouse workers.



Continued next page



Unique flora along the way were Cancer Root, Coral Root and Pennywort. The most exciting part of the hike was climbing up and down the steep hillside from the tracks to the amazing Hiwassee using a climbing rope. Thanks so much to Larry Jarkovsky for a fun-filled day!

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO YELLOW STRIPEY THINGS



CARPENTER BEE

- ACTS LIKE IT'S TOUGH, BUT CAN'T ACTUALLY HURT YOU
- HAS NO CONCEPT OF WHAT GLASS IS
- LIVES IN YOUR FENCE
- FLIES AGGRESSIVELY TO TRY AND SCARE YOU AWAY



HONEYBEE

- IS THE BEE THAT NEEDS HELP THE MOST
- EXCELLENT POLLINATOR
- VERY FRIENDLY
- CAN ONLY STING ONCE



BUMBLEBEE

- ALSO POLLINATES STUFF VERY WELL
- SO FAT IT SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO FLY
- WILL LET YOU PET IT WITHOUT GETTING AGITATED
- ACTUALLY A FLYING PANDA



HOVERFLY

- WEARS YELLOW STRIPEY UNIFORM TO SCARE YOU
- ACTUALLY CAN'T DO ANYTHING TO YOU
- HANGS OUT IN FIELDS
- FOLLOWS YOU IF IT LIKES YOU



PAPER WASP

- LOOKS SCARY, BUT WILL ONLY ATTACK IF PROVOKED
- STING HURTS LIKE THE DEVIL
- WILL CHASE YOU IF YOU SWAT AT IT
- HAS NO CONCEPT OF PERSONAL SPACE



YELLOW JACKET

- WANTS YOUR FOOD AND WILL FIGHT YOU FOR IT
- NEVER LEAVES YOU ALONE
- WILL STING YOU JUST FOR THE HECK OF IT
- IS JUST A JERK



CICADA KILLER

- LOOKS LIKE SATAN'S NIGHTMARES
- EXCLUSIVELY EATS CICADAS
- CAN STING YOU, BUT USUALLY WON'T
- STILL PRETTY TERRIFYING



DIRT DAUBER

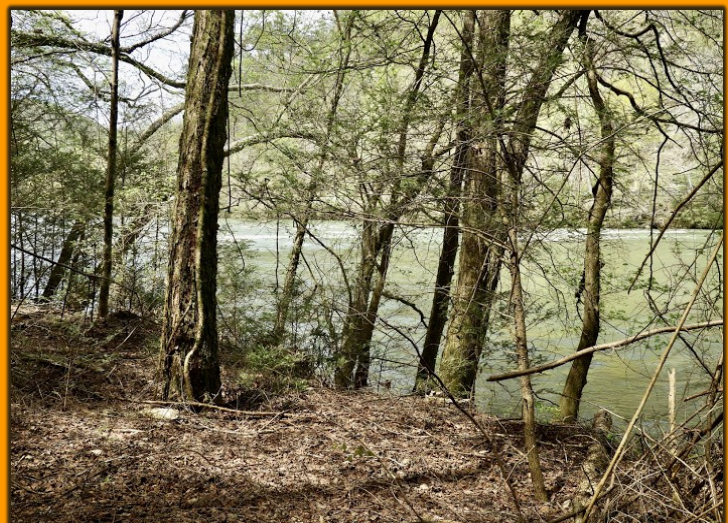
- ALMOST NEVER STINGS ANYTHING EXCEPT SPIDERS
- BUILDS NEST IN THE GROUND
- HOARDS SPIDERS IN SAID NEST
- COOLEST LOOKING OF THE WASPS

Historical Hikes to Caney Creek Village

by Clare Sullivan with photos courtesy of Suzy Downing

The hike to the unique little village of Caney Creek sparked lots of interest. Thus, Judy Price and Clare Sullivan led three hikes to explore the artifacts. A total of 29 hikers had an exciting time walking through a recently controlled burn area down a steep descent into a community that disappeared in 1941. The village was built by the Eastern Tennessee Power Company in 1918 for the employees who built the flume between Dam No.2 and Powerhouse No. 2 on Highway 64 along the Ocoee River. The only way in and out of the community was by boat or by a 150' suspension bridge. The village was featured in *Ripley's Believe It Or Not* for being the only village in the United States that had never had an automobile or horse-drawn vehicle. Being very modern for its day, the community had concrete sidewalks, electric streetlights, telephones, fire hydrants, city water and a lighted tennis court. Concrete used in the construction was the same grade as the concrete for the dam.

Residents used the "Toonerville Trolley" to travel to work. The trolley ran on storage batteries. More information about Caney Creek can be found online and at the Ducktown Basin Museum. The forest service road to the trailhead is only open March 15-31 and September 1 – December 31.





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!



THE BLACK SHEEP



KOREAN ALPINE CLUB OF GEORGIA



NORTH GEORGIA TREKS PHOTOGRAPHY



OCOOE ANIMAL HOSPITAL



SAVE GEORGIA'S HEMLOCKS

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STAR MOUNTAIN OUTFITTERS



TAPOCO LODGE



THE DUCKTOWN COPPER INN



WILDWOOD MAGIC

Upcoming Hikes and Work Trips

by Tom Sewell, Hiking Director

Guidelines for Our Hikes

- ◆ Only hikes that do not require shuttles are allowed under the auspices of BMTA.
- ◆ All hikers must drive to the meeting place and trailhead in their own cars -- no carpooling except among family members.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ All hikes are limited to a maximum of 10 participants—hike leaders may impose even lower limits.

Before, during, and after a hike, participants must maintain an appropriate distance from one another (an absolute minimum of six feet—but 10 or 15 or 20 is much better).

May

May 3 (Monday) Bald River Falls Trail off the Cherohala Parkway in Tellico Plains, TN. Moderate 9.8 miles round trip. We will hike this incredibly beautiful trail to the last waterfall a short distance from Bald River and eat lunch there, then return to our vehicles. There are numerous impressive waterfalls in the first 2 miles of the trail, then the trail flattens out somewhat with some great campsites and swimming holes. This trip is listed as moderate due to its length and the rockiness of the trail. Hike Leaders Brenda and Rick Harris. For more information contact hikeleaderBH@bmtamail.org or hikeleaderRH@bmtamail.org.

May 5 (Wednesday) Lady Slipper Hike: BMT at Weaver Creek, Blue Ridge. Moderate to strenuous 3.8 miles. This will be a SLOW, LEISURELY hike to enjoy the wildflowers. Initially we'll pass by beautiful Mountain Laurel groves peppered with Flame Azaleas. Stop for a leisurely lunch at the water cutoff beside some of the largest Lady Slippers on this section. As we stroll back to the trailhead, we'll pass numerous gardens of the pink beauties. Hike Leaders Joy and Frank Forehand. For more information contact hikeleaderJF@bmtamail.org.



May 8 (Saturday) GA Work Trip Wilscot Gap >Dial Road. Logout, brushout and tread repair. For more information contact David Watkins david.watkins2112@yahoo.com

May 10 (Monday) Naked Ground, Haoe and Hangover via the BMT and back with possible side trip to Bob Bald off the Cherohala Skyway. Difficult 7 to 9 miles. We meet at the Cherohala Skyway Visitor Center in Tellico Plains, TN, then drive to the Wolf Laurel Trailhead, about an hour drive. We will hike up the Stratton Ridge Trail 2 miles to the intersection with the BMT, then go north to Naked Ground, Haoe and the Hangover with its 360-degree views of the Smokies and the surrounding mountains in TN and NC National Forests. After eating lunch at the Hangover, we will return with a possible 2-mile side round trip to Bob Bald. For more information. Hike Leaders Brenda and Rick Harris. For more information contact hikeleaderBH@bmtamail.org or hikeleaderRH@bmtamail.org.

May 12 (Wednesday) Fires Creek Trails near Hayesville, NC. Moderate/strenuous 7 miles. Phillips Ridge to Rim and return via Phillips Ridge. Beautiful Laurel Creek and along the Rim Trail are Rhododendron and spring wildflowers, such as Trillium, Lady Slipper and Solomon's Seal. Grouse, warblers, deer, bear, Russian boar and hawks roam the area. It's a beautiful wilderness not frequently visited. Hike Leader Steve Dennison. For more information contact hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org.

May 14 (Friday) Rocktown Trail near Lafayette, GA – Moderate 4 miles. Maze of large, oddly shaped sandstone-conglomerate boulders atop Pigeon Mountain and a short waterfall trail enroute. Waterfall more likely to have water in the spring. Rocktown Trail is located within a GA Wildlife Management Area. Involves carrying a free GA Lifetime Sportsman license for Georgia residents over 65 or obtain a permit through the GA Department of Natural Resources. Hike Leader Steve Dennison. For more information contact hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org.

May 19 (Wednesday) Talking Rock Nature Preserve utilizing the various loops in the Talking Rock Nature Preserve. We plan 5 easy miles, but you may decide to add more if you wish after the hike. Hike Leader Howard Baggett. For more information contact hikeleaderHB@bmtamail.org.

May 21 (Friday) Amadahy Trail. Dog friendly hike (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Easy to moderate 5 miles along the shore of Carter's Lake. Lunch at the marine campground. Hike Leader Ken Cissna. For more information contact hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org.



May 22 (Saturday) TN Work Trip Sycamore Creek Trail. Section 17a-b. Annual logout and refresh blazes. For more information contact Pam and Kent Mathews pamalahallmathews@yahoo.com.

May 24 (Monday) Turtletown Creek Falls near Farner, TN. Moderate 4.5-mile round-trip hike to two of the prettiest waterfalls in the area. Hiking poles recommended. Hike Leader Steve Dennison. For more information contact hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org.

May 29 (Saturday) Upper Springer Mountain Loop. With two lovely vistas this 4.6-mile loop provides visits to the southern terminus of both the Appalachian and Benton MacKaye trails. Some history of these two trails is included with this moderate trek. Hike Leader George Owen. For more information contact hikeleaderGO@bmtamail.org.

June

June 7 (Monday) Quartz Loop at the Whitewater Center in Ducktown, TN. Moderate 4.7 miles. Hike Leader Evelin Yarns. For more information contact hikeleaderEY@bmtamail.org.

June 9 (Wednesday) Bolling Park Trails Canton, GA. Easy 5-6 miles in this great preserve. Hike Leader Howard Baggett. For more information contact hikeleaderHB@bmtamail.org.



June 12 (Saturday) GA Work Trip Fall Branch > Weaver Creek Sections 6 b,c,d and 7a. Logout, brushout and tread repair. For more information contact Bob Cowdrick GAMaintDirector@bmtamail.org.

June 13 (Sunday) Easy to moderate 4 miles at the Ocoee Whitewater Center to see the water release arrive from two miles upriver. See rafters and kayakers on the raging rapids. Learn about the 1996 Olympic competition for kayaks and canoes. Hike one of the trails past the tasty wild raspberries and through the lovely Rhododendrons back to the Thunder Rock parking lot. Hike Leader Clare Sullivan. For more information contact hikeleaderCS2@bmtamail.org.

June 14 (Monday) BMT: Lost Creek Section. Dog friendly hike (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Easy 6 miles. Beautiful walk along Big Lost Creek. One stream crossing will probably get your feet a little wet so come prepared. Hike Leader Ken Cissna. For more information contact hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org.

June 19 (Saturday) AT/BMT double-loop hike west from Three Forks. This moderate 6-mile hike covers the lower north flank and top of Rich Mountain. Hike Leader George Owen. For more information contact hikeleaderGO@bmtamail.org.

June 23 (Wednesday) Gorges State Park near Sapphire, NC to Rainbow Falls and Whitewater Falls. Both falls are spectacular. One is a 411' fall. Moderate 5-mile hike with good possibility of seeing one of the closest rainbows ever. Two hour drive each way from Blairsville, GA. Leader will provide a link to Google Maps directions from Blairsville, GA to Gorges State Park. Date subject to change if cloudy skies forecast in the vicinity of the falls. Leader has hiked it twice and each time viewed a huge rainbow around noon to 12:30 PM on sunny days with a large waterfall in the background during return portion of the hike. Good canopy on this trail and fairly high elevation so heat shouldn't be a major issue. Hike Leader Steve Dennison. For more information contact hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org.



June 26 (Saturday) TN Work Trip Heart of Darkness. Section 16a Sandy Gap to Round Top. Annual logout and refresh blazes. For more information contact Rick Harris, tn-ncmaintdirector@bmtamail.org.

July

July 7 (Wednesday) Wildcat Creek Trail near Ellijay, GA. Approximately 7.5 miles with stream crossing to Fall Branch Falls Trail to Ammons Falls and return. Some brief strenuous segments. Hiking poles recommended. Trail located in GA Wildlife Management Area and requires a free GA Lifetime Sportsman license for Georgia residents over 65 or obtaining a permit thru GA Department of Natural Resources. Hike Leader Steve Dennison. For more information hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org.



July 10 (Saturday) GA Work Trip Weaver Creek > Boardtown Road. Sections 7b,c,d. Logout, brushout and tread repair. For more information contact Bob Cowdrick GAMaintDirector@bmtamail.org.

July 12 (Monday) Cartecay River Loop Trails. Dog friendly hike (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Moderate 5-6 miles, much of it along the beautiful Cartecay River. Hike Leader Ken Cissna. For more information contact hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org.

To view more events from our website go [HERE](#).

The deadline for the June Newsletter is Wednesday, June 2.
Thank you!