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### BMTA Officers 2020-2021

|                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| President:       | Ken Cissna     |
| Vice President:  | Joy Forehand   |
| Secretary:       | Clare Sullivan |
| Treasurer:       | Lydia Burns    |
| GA M/C:          | Bob Cowdrick   |
| TN/NC M/C:       | Rick Harris    |
| Smokies Coord:   | Larry Dumas    |
| Hiking Director: | Tom Sewell     |
| Store:           | Sue Ricker     |
| Membership:      | Frank Forehand |
| Publicity:       | Cary Page      |
| Conservation:    | Dave Ricker    |
| Past President:  | Barry Allen    |
| Newsletter:      | Kathy Williams |
| State Rep GA:    | Debra Guhl     |
| State Rep TN/NC: | Steve Barnes   |



**BMTA Headquarters**



# Benton MacKaye Trail Association

VOLUME 38, ISSUE 9

SEPTEMBER 2021

## Update Regarding BMT Becoming a National Scenic Trail

by Ken Cissna

In April of this year, I reported that the BMTA was interested in pursuing National Scenic Trail status for the BMT. Later that month, the Board unanimously approved this effort, and since then, a small working group has been leading this effort. It is time for an update—and time to ask for your assistance. But first, let's review.

As most of us know, the BMTA was founded in 1980 and work on the trail began that year. The trail honors Benton MacKaye, the man whose vision brought into being the Appalachian Trail. What many might not know is that next month is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of MacKaye's article proposing the AT, "An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning," which was published in the *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* in October 1921.

Although work on the AT began almost immediately, the Benton MacKaye Trail took a little longer. But now, after 40 very successful years, it is time for the BMT to move to the next step: Joining the Appalachian Trail and only ten others to become the nation's 12th National Scenic Trail (NST).

Our trail fits the criteria perfectly, and we have two things going for us that few, if any, trails that have sought this designation had. First, every one of our 288 miles of trail already exists, and 95% of those miles are in National Forests or National Parks. In addition, for 40 years and counting, the BMT has been and is now cared for by an active volunteer organization.

So, where do we go from here? Until now, we have been in what might be called the quiet phase of the campaign — speaking with national trail leaders, key members of the United States Forest Service and National Park Service, and politicians in the area of the trail. We also have been developing written materials that will support this effort. Now, we are ready to go public and this is where we can use your help.

Apparently, "now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their country," which I think I learned in grade school, was not uttered by Patrick Henry but was part of an early 1900s typing test. Regardless, now is the time when the good women and men of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association can come to its aid and help with our effort to gain NST designation. What do we need? We need volunteers who can help us spread the word by sharing their time, talent and expertise.

**First, contacts:**

- ◆ Do you know an influential or prominent person in our three-state area?
- ◆ Can you make calls or write postcards?

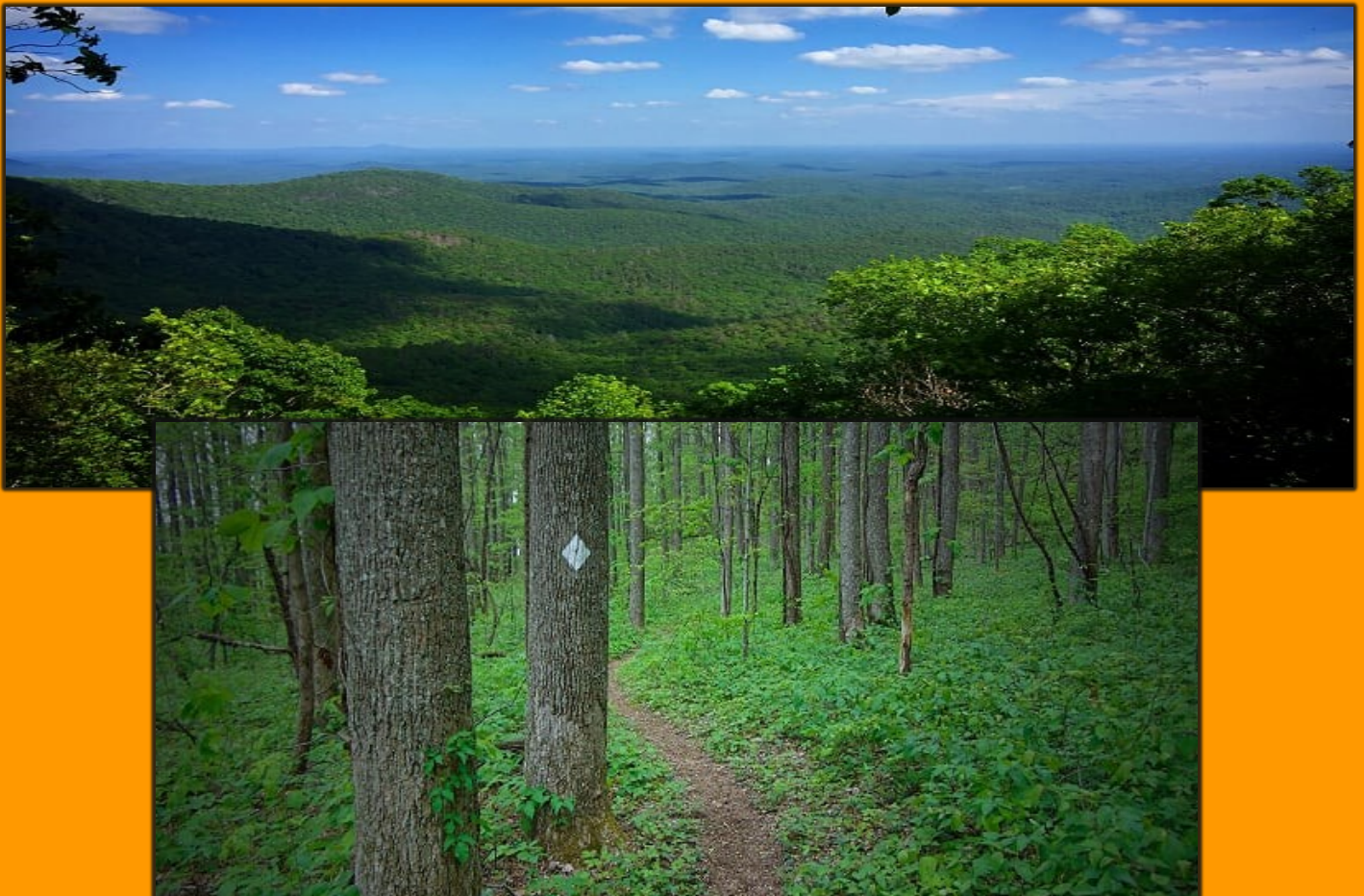
**Second, assistance with our communications and publicity efforts – Do you have expertise in:**

- ◆ Writing articles
- ◆ Videography or YouTube Channel videos
- ◆ Graphic design
- ◆ Marketing or advertising
- ◆ Communications campaign organization or implementation

Please let us know how **You** can help. Just send an email to [contactbmta@bmtamail.org](mailto:contactbmta@bmtamail.org) or use the “contact us” button on the website, [www.bmta.org](http://www.bmta.org).

Attaining NST designation will require a great deal of local and regional support - including political support - because the prestigious designation as a NST requires an act of Congress. And that means it needs Support, especially grassroots, local, and regional - Your Support!

Thank you to all - past and present - who have contributed to making the BMT the enjoyable, well-maintained trail that it is today - and thank you to all who, over the next year, will help us bring the NST designation to the BMT!





## Nominating Committee's Slate of Nominees for 2022 Board

*Nominating Committee:*

*Bob Ruby, Chair; Clare Sullivan; Barry Allen; Darcy Douglas and ex officio member, Ken Cissna*

### 2022 Board Candidates

| Position                 | Current          | Years in Office | Nominee           |
|--------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| President                | Ken Cissna       | 1               | Ken Cissna        |
| Vice President           | Joy Forehand     | 3               | Clare Sullivan    |
| Secretary                | Clare Sullivan   | 3               | Patrick Ward      |
| Treasurer                | Lydia Burns, CPA | 1               | Lydia Burns, CPA  |
| GA Maintenance           | Bob Cowdrick     | 1               | Bob Cowdrick      |
| TN/NC Maintenance        | Rick Harris      | 2               | Keith Mertz       |
| Smokies Coordinator      | Larry Dumas      | 4               | Larry Dumas       |
| Membership               | Frank Forehand   | 2               | Frank Forehand    |
| Publicity                | Cary Page        | 1               | Joy Forehand      |
| Conservation             | Dave Ricker      | 4               | Dave Ricker       |
| Hiking                   | Tom Sewell       | 1               | Tom Sewell        |
| State Rep – GA           | Debra Guhl       | 1               | Presidential Pick |
| State Rep – TN/NC        | Steve Barnes     | 1               | Presidential Pick |
| Immediate Past President | Barry Allen      | 1               | 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 2021 Annual Meeting, set for Unicoi State Park and Lodge, in Helen, GA, on November 13.

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.



## GSMNP Needs Our Help Volunteer Today!

To complete much needed work on our trails, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park is hosting multiple volunteer work events during the month of September. Individuals and groups are invited to sign up for any of the scheduled workdays as well as sign up to be added to the Trails and Facilities Volunteer Program mailing list.

*\*Although the BMT is not included on the schedule for trail work, we encourage our members to help when available as we plan with the Park to increase our own maintenance opportunities.*

Trail maintenance workdays will involve hiking distances of up to 4 miles with tools. Work will vary and may include cutting back overgrown vegetation, hauling rocks, and digging out ditches and drainage features. The workdays will begin at 9 AM and last until 3 PM. Tools and safety gear will be provided by park staff. Age is limited to those over 16.

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### **Prior Registration Is Required for All Events!**

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To RSVP, contact Trails and Facilities Volunteer Coordinator, Adam Monroe at:

(828) 497-1949 or [adam\\_monroe@nps.gov](mailto:adam_monroe@nps.gov) prior to the scheduled event date to register.

For more information on the Trails Forever initiative visit: [Volunteer with Trails Forever](#).

**\*To receive BMTA credit for hours worked, please email hours to [bmtahours@bmtamail.org](mailto:bmtahours@bmtamail.org).**

### **Service Dates and Locations**

- ◆ September 9 — Meigs Mountain Trail (Elkmont)
- ◆ September 8, 15, 22 — Forney Ridge Trail (Trails Forever Project)
- ◆ September 25 — National Public Lands Day (Saturday)



## 2021 BMTA Annual Meeting

# Banquet Menu

*Garden Salad*

*Bread & Rolls*

*Carver Will Be Serving Sirloin, Ham & Turkey*

*Green Beans*

*Vegetable Medley*

*Mashed Potatoes w/Gravy / Rice w/Gravy*

*Coffee (Decaf & Regular) / Iced Tea / Cash Bar*

*Dessert - TBA*

*Optional - Vegan Plated Meal*

**\$35**

*\*Cash Bar*

**[Dinner Reservations](#)**

For reservations call **800-573-9659**.

To receive your discount, use Code 99529!

Mention the Benton MacKaye Trail Association!

## Yellow Creek Mountain Work

by Dick Evans



## Adopt a Piece of Serenity

by Richard Harris

Many of you in the past few months have checked out the sections of the BMT available for adoption. We would love to have you consider taking a section as your own to look after. A Section Maintainer in general has the following responsibilities:

1. Keep your section brushed out, generally with a brushcutter or swingblade and loppers two or three times a year, such as in late spring, mid-summer and the fall after the end of the growing season. We can provide the tools.
2. Remove small logs off the trail with hand saws. Notify us of larger logs requiring a chainsaw or crosscut saw. Sawyers using chainsaws or crosscut saws must be certified by the USFS but use of hand saws does not require certification.
3. Clean out water diversions so water does not flow down the center of the trail.
4. Repair minor sloughing of the trail off the edge of the side slope.

Notify us of any major maintenance needs such as damage to bridges, sloughing of the trail down the side slope, downed trees blocking the trail and the possible need for reroutes. These larger problems are usually dealt with by a larger crew of experienced maintainers or on our monthly BMTA work trips, which in Tennessee are generally on the fourth Saturday of the month and in Georgia, on the second Saturday of the month. Also, let us know if the blazes need to be refreshed. We have a separate blazing team that paints the blazes. Additionally, if signs are missing or damaged, notify us so we can replace them with new signs.

To learn more about being a section maintainer, go to the BMTA website [Trail Maintenance](#) page and review the information on trail maintenance. There is a ton of great information. After you have done so, consider contacting Rickard Harris at [TN/NC Maintenance Director](#), 423-253-6358 home or 513-260-1184 cell, with what Tennessee section you are considering. If you are interested in a Georgia section contact Bob Cowdrick at [GA Maintenance Director](#), 678-215-5276 cell. We can fill you in on the specifics of the section and arrange to go out with you to see the sections firsthand. If you decide to take on a section, we will support you with whatever you need, such as loaning tools and PPE (personal protective equipment). We also provide training on how to perform maintenance.

We encourage possible future maintainers to come on a couple of our regularly scheduled monthly work trips - in Georgia (the second Saturday of the month) or Tennessee (the fourth Saturday of the month), so you can meet us and learn what is involved with trail maintenance. These work trips are advertised on our [BMTA website calendar](#). To sign up for emails with regular updates of upcoming work trips, go [here](#).

A list of available sections of the BMT available for adoption are [here](#). Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Richard Harris  
TN/NC Maintenance Director  
Benton MacKaye Trail Association  
423-253-6358 home  
513-260-1184 cell





BMTA and the Cherokee Hiking Club are sponsoring a Campout at Fall Creek Falls State Park. Hike each day, Monday – Thursday. Reserve your campsite now. Rick and Brenda Harris will be in campsite A30. You also can reserve a room in the lodge (if open by then — it's being rebuilt) or reserve a cabin. They go quickly!

- ◆ **September13** (Monday) we will hike trails at the State Park.
- ◆ **September14** (Tuesday) we will hike to Virgin Falls. A rather unique 110' waterfall coming out of a cave!
- ◆ **September15** (Wednesday) we will hike at Burgess Falls. Four impressive waterfalls cascade down 250' — the most spectacular of which is the last 130' falls that plunges into a deep gorge.
- ◆ **September16** (Thursday) we will hike to Cummins Falls and swim below the falls (online permit required). The rock features abutting the waterfall creates a stadium-effect for the beautiful falls that ends in an inviting swimming hole.

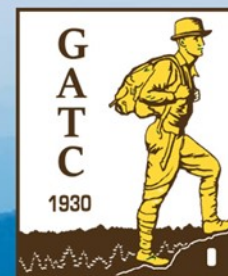


To sign up, contact Hike Leader Rick and Brenda Harris,  
[harrisri@aol.com](mailto:harrisri@aol.com) or [Sign Up Online](#).

## Trail Skills Workshop

### Lake Winfield Scott, GA

September 25 - 26, 2021



Make plans to attend the annual **Trail Skills Workshop at Lake Winfield Scott September 25 – 26, 2021**. This will be a great event, with beautiful weather, to learn skills and reconnect with old friends and make some new ones. For more information and to register go to <https://forms.gle/5GBSMz5fdKuYnVy1A>, direct questions to [tsw@georgia-atclub.org](mailto:tsw@georgia-atclub.org).

## Coker Creek Falls Trail

by Richard Harris

On this hot and humid day, 10 of us met at 9AM at the TN 68 crossing of the BMT for a joint Cherokee Hiking Club and Benton MacKaye Trail Association hike. We carpoled to the Coker Creek Falls parking lot to begin our hike. We trekked past the iconic water cascades of Coker Creek and were tempted to jump in, but instead we just took a bunch of pictures. The trail took us mostly downhill along the valley of Coker Creek to the Coker Creek primitive campsite. At this point we joined the BMT via the bridge over the creek.



Trekking down was strenuous due to the many rocky, rooty and brushy areas. However, the trees had been cleared off the trail recently by the Tellico/Ocoee Volunteer Trail Crew, making the hike a pleasure - mostly. It was at least tolerable.

At the primitive campsite we ate lunch and chatted while some went rock hopping out into the creek bed. We found a dead snake, but thankfully no live, venomous ones!

After crossing the bridge, we headed uphill with a 1500-foot elevation rise over 2.5 miles to the crest of Unicoi Mountain. Once there the trail leveled out before heading downhill to our cars.

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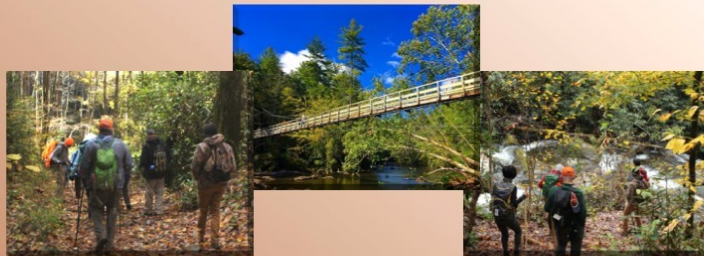


In the parking area we enjoyed cold watermelon before the rains came. While retrieving our shuttle vehicles, the heavens opened up for a good soaking.

Hike Leaders were Richard and Brenda Harris. Attendees included Jack Callahan, Patrick and Judy Iverson, Penny Strickland, Teresa Greene, Teresa Wyatt, Doug Lynch and Mary Alton. Our total distance was 6.8 miles with an elevation gain of 1522'.

## 2021 BMTA Annual Meeting & Hike Fest

### [2021 Hike Fest Schedule](#)



### Featured Speaker

**Larry Anderson**



Author of *Benton MacKaye: Conservationist, Planner, and Creator of the Appalachian Trail (Creating the North American Landscape)*.

**For reservations call 800-573-9659.  
To receive your discount, use Code 99529!  
Mention the Benton MacKaye Trail Association!**

## Defining BMTA “Section 8”

by Bob Cowdrick

We were fortunate to have a number of military veterans attending our work day on August 14th. They, for sure, and some of you, may know the military definition of Section 8: “Providing for the discharge of those who are deemed unfit for service.”

None of our BMTA veterans were ever Sectioned 8, but....

Our BMTA Section 8 was unfit (blowdowns, tread repair, water diversions, brushing, etc.) and needed some service!

David Watkins led Crew 1 focusing on Section 8b. He, Joe Cantwell, Kelly Wentworth, Samuel Sly, Steve Hayden and Art Kolberg cleaned out 27 water diversions after driving to Hudson Gap. Nice job!

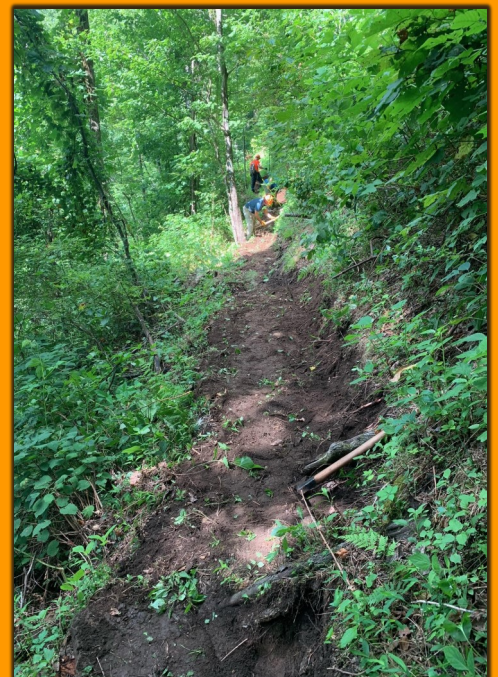
Patrick Ward, Barry Allen, Shane Morrison, Terry Long and Chris Behrens did 150 yards of tread repair on Section 8c. A very narrow trail is now wider and more passable. Well done!

Sue Ricker, Darcy Douglas, Dave Ricker and Brian Trinkle headed directly to Section 8g and 8h. Now nine fewer blowdowns exist on Section 8g. Section 8h has been brushed and lopped out. Awesome work!

George Owen (the teacher) gave Dale Clark and Bob Cowdrick (the students), a lesson on sign installation at Watson and Pate gaps. It is not as easy as you think. A shout out to Ralph Heller for making some great signs!

In all 18 BMTA members and guests committed over 146 hours of time to make Section 8, more “fit” for hikers.

Our next work day will be September 11<sup>th</sup> when we will be assisting the USFS with a Falls Branch Falls restoration project.



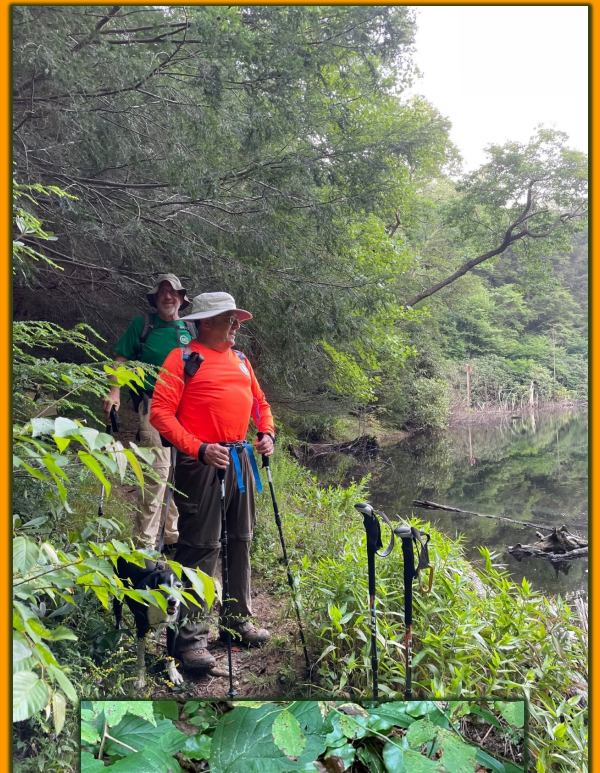
## The “Slippery Steep” at Lake Conasauga

by Gilbert Treadwell

On Monday, August 9, the "usual suspects" (Ken Cissna, Mike Pilvinsky and myself) headed to camp at Lake Conasauga. The campground was not busy, so we got two prime sites.

No folks signed up for the day hikes, so on Tuesday the three of us went on the Tower Trail and the Songbird Trail for a six-mile stroll. We saw American chestnuts, turk's cap lilly and carolina phlox.

On Wednesday after dropping off a vehicle at Betty Gap, we set off for the Chestnut Lead Trail. It had rained the night before, creating the “Slippery Steep” on the trail down to the Conasauga River. We braved blowdowns as well as a 1000' elevation drop. After many stream crossings, we started back up the “Slippery Steep”. During hikes like this, we have commented “you see that tree, I will never see that tree again”. It was a tough four miles with a 700' elevation gain. Perhaps we will hike it again once it is dry. We left this wonderful campground on Thursday, hopefully to return again soon.

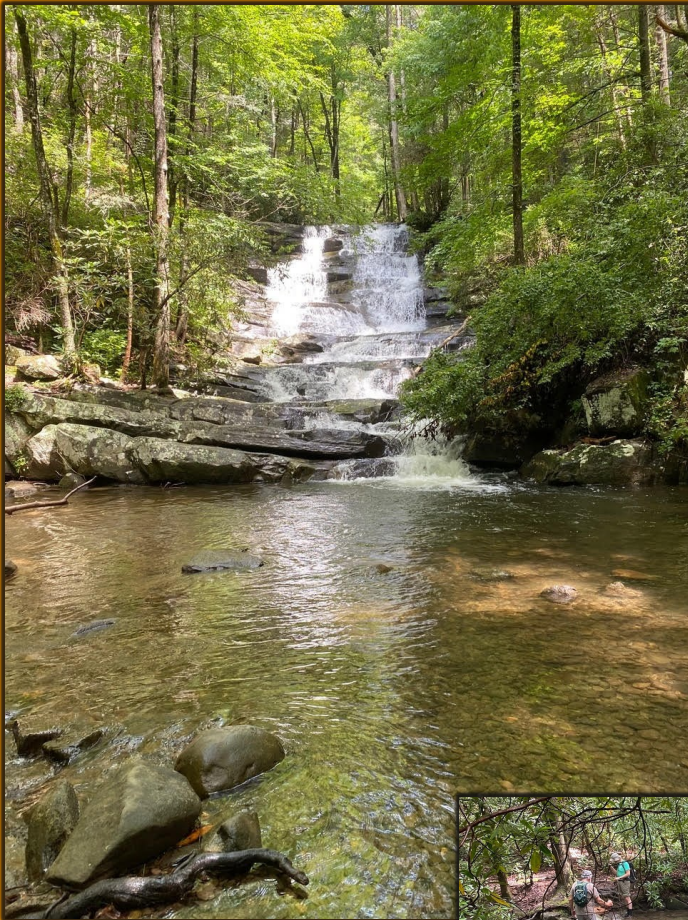


## Emery Creek Trail

by Ken Cissna with photos courtesy of Tom Johnson

We had a lot of rain in the days before this hike to Emery Creek, so we found a lot of water in both Holly and Emery creeks. But we got over all 26 of the water crossings *almost* without incident. We had Adrianna Ernst, Martha Fowler, Larry Jarkovsky, Tom Johnson, Nancy Sauls and your faithful hike leader. Between all the water crossings and the downed trees (yes, *still*), I decided not to make this a dog-friendly hike, so Artie was left at home. Probably slept through my absence.

Both the lower and upper falls did not disappoint. We ate sitting on the big rocks at the upper falls. The entertainment of the day was provided on the way back when everyone got to watch me hopping and slapping and yelling as I ran 50 or more yards down the trail - yes, you guessed it - I must have bumped into a yellow jacket nest because there were a bunch of them that didn't seem all that happy with me. How we missed them on the way in I'll never know.



## A History of a Rather Common, Nondescript Trail Bridge

by Marty Dominy

The article in the August 2021 Newsletter about the Thunder Rock Bridge spurred me to look through some records to remember the details of the bridge that was being replaced. Some background on the trail route will make this more meaningful.

Throughout the 1980's, the USDA Forest Service held fast on an early decision that the Benton MacKaye Trail would go no further north than the Tennessee/Georgia state line, also the boundary between the Chattahoochee National Forest and Cherokee National Forest. By the early 1990s, the ice began to crack on that issue in advance of what would be a long thaw. The concession that was offered was to authorize the Benton MacKaye Trail to be extended as far as Highway 64 at the Ocoee River. Work began scouting the best route from the state line to Highway 64. Several good trails already existed through the Big Frog Wilderness between the state line and Sheeds Creek – Peavine Road. Consideration was given to extending the Licklog Trail and crossing the Ocoee River at Ocoee #3 Dam. An idea to cross the mostly dry riverbed below Ocoee #3 Dam to reach Highway 64 near the present location of the Whitewater Center was even floated. In the end, the future route over the existing Dry Pond Lead Trail and the road bridge over the Ocoee River won out over a more dubious river crossing and an abandoned and overgrown trail along the ridge north of Boyd Gap.

Investigative scouting in the latter part of 1992 gave way to flagging of the proposed routes in 1993. At one point, a trail coming from the trailhead of the Big Frog Trail was flagged to the west side of FS 45. However, the Forest Service sought to reduce the grade of the south half of FS 45 and built their new road alignment just about on top of the flag line in places. So, the Benton MacKaye Trail was routed along the old, abandoned part of FS 45 and a new trail descending into the Ocoee River Gorge. Finding the route to the edge of the gorge was not particularly difficult as there were remnants of an old trail and old roadbeds to be used. The route into the gorge was a different matter. Clayton Pannell and I looked at descending the west side of a ridge over the whitewater put-in, eventually circling the north end of the ridge in a long, sweeping curve to reach the flats just above the river. This was dismissed as a quite difficult build with some potential hazard to rafting public below. Before it was all said and done, there were five different flag lines produced by various parties for a route into the gorge. The approved route, and the route that is used to this day, descended parallel to an intermittent stream in a cove until the descent of the stream became too steep. At that point the trail skirted off to the left, used several switchbacks to return to the base of the cove, and reached the river flats beside the stream. By spring of 1994, the construction of the trail was about finished.

One glaring omission in the construction of the trail was how to cross the little overflow drainage that fed back into the Ocoee River just downstream of the trail. The steady traffic of workers going to and from the work site had already established the route of the trail from Thunder Rock Campground to the cove. Unfortunately, it had been directed across the drainage at an abandoned beaver dam. While the workers had crossed on the old dam with great regularity, it was not suitable for public use. To make matters worse, there were better bridge sites upstream and downstream of the beaver dam. The installation of steps in the switchbacks on the slope had just concluded, and there were 6 x 6 pressure treated timbers left over from that project. Rather than waste left-over timbers or hauling them off to some other project, a bridge was proposed, with the timbers on hand being the major supports. Drawings of the proposed bridge were submitted to the Forest Service office in Cleveland. Hearing no objection, work started by digging the deepest possible hole that could be achieved with a set of manual hole diggers. The bottoms of the holes were lined with rock to provide a solid foundation, and two timber piers were set angling in toward the center of the bridge. Backfill was placed in the holes as bracing held the piers at the desired angle. Once the backfill was compacted, cuts were made along a level line across the tops of the piers. This allowed a timber beam to be placed and fastened to the piers with long spikes. Over that beam and over timber sills set in each bank of the drainage came timber stringers. Clayton Pannell was a great help in getting this done. This completed the substructure of the bridge.

Continued next page

Deck boards were purchased and donated to the BMTA. These were 2 x 6 pressure treated boards, pre-cut to four feet lengths, that were transported to the end of the loop at Thunder Rock Campground. About that time, the campground was closed to the public and became the staging point for the U. S. Army as they constructed a new Bailey Bridge across the Ocoee River in advance of the development of the Olympic Whitewater Center. A few of the deck boards disappeared during this period. In the meantime, a few more of the boards disappeared as the campground was re-opened to the public. These were confiscated one evening in early July before they could be used as firewood. To prevent any more losses, the deck boards were moved to the bridge site that same evening by the illumination of a flashlight. By the end of July, the deck boards were fastened to the stringers and the bridge was complete.

At some later date, I received an unpleasant call from Cleveland about our unapproved and non-standard bridge. I asked if anyone had reviewed the drawings submitted. The answer was that the reviewing parties did not understand the drawings. Hardly my fault, I thought, given the simplicity of the bridge, but I kept my mouth shut on that one. I requested a standard Forest Service bridge drawing appropriate for that particular location, but it must still be lost in the mail. After the call ended, I thought to myself that if the people managing the forest disliked the bridge, they were certainly welcome to remove it themselves. For a timber bridge of this type, a twenty-year useful lifespan would be expected. As it turned out, the little bridge that should have never been built lasted 27 years. I may be biased on this, but I think it acquitted itself nicely.



Before and After !

## Craddock Center to Weaver Creek

by Ken Cissna with photos courtesy of Beth Rothermel

We had a great August day for this dog-friendly hike from the Craddock Center parking lot just off 515 to the Weaver Creek trailhead about 2.5 miles away. Of course, hiker dog Artie led the way with eight of us following: Barbara Chastain, Jane Giddens, Stephanie Hodgkin, Tom Johnson, Beth Rothermel, Fran Stoecker, Penny Strickland and hike leader Ken Cissna, aka Artie's dad.

This section of the BMT requires crossing two small streams (each way), which we did without incident. Unfortunately, when we returned to the parking lot, three of us slipped on the first few feet of asphalt, with two actually going down—but no one was injured.

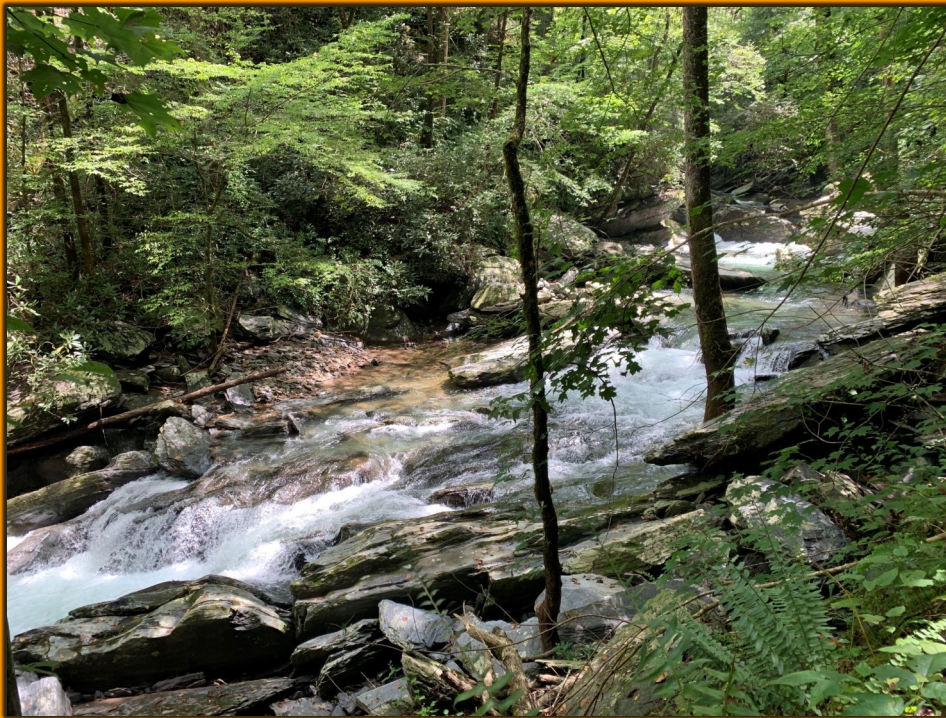
Weather was mostly overcast and not too hot or humid, but the sun had a way of peeking through just as we stepped out of the tree cover. I kept hoping we'd see Kathy Williams, BMTA Newsletter Editor and the maintainer of most of this portion of the trail, out for her usual walk. We did not see Kathy, but we did run into a couple from Tampa, Florida, who were looking forward to turning up the hill at Weaver Creek.



## Small Group, but Great Group on the BMT!

by Clare Sullivan

It was a small group of hikers, but a great group of hikers, who hiked 8.5 miles from Reliance to Lost Creek Campground and back. However, since Tropical Storm Fred had just passed through, we had to stop and clear brush eight times. This section is definitely one of beauty and grandeur as the creek meanders through a limestone gorge. Hikers were rewarded with the splendor of cardinal flowers. This hike is rich in history of the ghost town, Probst, established in 1909. The town was named for the secretary of the Prendergast Lumber Company. Some reports say Probst had eight buildings and 40 residents. The old logging railroad went right through what is today Lost Creek Campground. More information is found in *Mountain Memories History, People, Legends & Tales of the Polk County Mountains* by Thurman Parish. See the rock wall from Probst in the photos below.



Gee, thanks Fred.



Rock wall from Probst.



# 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

**JEFFREY DEPAOLA**  
(404) 550-4488

**SPIRIT KNOB, LLC**  
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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

Because hiking in the outdoors is good for one's mental and physical health, we encouraged BMTA members and others to continue hiking during the COVID-19 health crisis *and to do so safely*. Thus, we continued our hiking program during 2020 and 2021.

Due to the availability of COVID-19 vaccines, we have further modified our hiking program:

- ◆ We have resumed allowing shuttle hikes but caution that (a) no hikers should ride with another or have another ride with them if they are concerned about their safety and (b) unvaccinated hikers should not assume that others will want to ride in vehicles with them.
- ◆ Carpooling is permitted but not required.
- ◆ Any potential hiker who is feeling ill or has been exposed recently to a person with an active case of COVID-19 must not come on a hike.
- ◆ Hikes are limited to a maximum of 10 participants in Tennessee and North Carolina and 12 participants in Georgia. Hike leaders may impose lower limits.
- ◆ Masks are optional, but hikers should maintain an appropriate distance from one another.

## September

**September 10 (Friday)** Gahuti Lite: Five Intersecting Trails Loop at Fort Mountain State Park. Dog friendly hike (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). About 5 moderate miles. Highlights include cascading creeks, a long-distance view and a lakeside walk. Ends with a moderate uphill walk. Hike leader Ken Cissna. For more information contact [hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org).



**September 11 (Saturday)** GA Work Trip Section 6b -- Trail restoration project at Fall Branch Falls.

For more information contact Ken Cissna [kcissna@usf.edu](mailto:kcissna@usf.edu)

**September 12-17 (Sunday-Friday)** Campout at Fall Creek Falls State Park. Hike each day, Monday – Thursday. Reserve your campsite now. Rick and Brenda Harris will be in campsite A30. You may also opt to reserve a room in the lodge if open by then (being rebuilt) or reserve a cabin. They go quickly.

**September 13 (Monday)** we will hike trails at the State Park.

**September 14 (Tuesday)** we will hike to Virgin Falls.

**September 15 (Wednesday)** we will hike at Burgess Falls.

**September 16 (Thursday)** we will hike to Cummins Falls and swim below the falls (online permit required).

Leaders Rick and Brenda Harris [harrisri@aol.com](mailto:harrisri@aol.com). Note: Joint BMTA and Cherokee Hiking Club event.



**September 25 (Saturday) TN Work Trip** Section 16c-d. Annual logout and refresh blazes. For more information contact Rick Harris [harrisri@aol.com](mailto:harrisri@aol.com).

## October

### Hikes in Celebration of Benton MacKaye's Proposal for the AT

#### Georgia Hikes

- ♦ **BMT/AT Loop from Big Stamp Gap** - Moderate five miles, (600' elevation change) with three minor creek crossings. Trip will include Springer Mountain (the southern start of the AT), the Benton MacKaye Memorial Placard at the start of the BMT and Owen Vista - a beautiful open view of the southeastern Appalachian Mountains.
  - October 1 (Friday) contact Hike Leader Darcy Douglas [hikeleaderDD@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderDD@bmtamail.org).
  - October 4 (Monday) contact Hike Leader Steve Dennison [hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org).
  - October 5 (Tuesday) contact Hike Leader Gilbert Treadwell [hikeleaderGT@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderGT@bmtamail.org).
  - October 18 (Monday) contact Hike Leader Steve Dennison [hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org).
  - October 24 (Sunday) contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna [hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org).
  - October 30 (Saturday) contact Hike Leader Barry Allen [hikeleaderBA@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderBA@bmtamail.org).
- ♦ **BMT/AT double loop hike west from Three Forks** - Moderate six mile hike (650' elevation change) covers the lower north flank and top of Rich Mountain.
  - October 1 (Friday) contact Hike Leader Steve Dennison [hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org).
  - October 4 (Monday) contact Hike Leader Darcy Douglas [hikeleaderDD@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderDD@bmtamail.org).
  - October 12 (Tuesday) contact Hike Leader Gilbert Treadwell [hikeleaderGT@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderGT@bmtamail.org).
  - October 27 (Wednesday) contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna [hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org).
- ♦ **BMT/AT Loop 3 Forks to Long Creek Falls to Hickory Flats** then FS road to No Name Bald rejoining the BMT back to 3 Forks. Moderate 7.5 moderate miles. 1,000 ft elevation gain.
  - October 5 (Tuesday) contact Hike Leader Darcy Douglas [hikeleaderDD@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderDD@bmtamail.org).
  - October 8 (Friday) contact Hike Leader Gilbert Treadwell [hikeleaderGT@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderGT@bmtamail.org).
  - October 29 (Friday) contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna [hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org).

#### Tennessee Hikes

- ♦ **BMT from Hwy 68 to Buck Bald and return** - Total of four miles. Incomparable 360 view of the Appalachian Mountains. Parking area limited to around eight vehicles. Buck Bald is ½ mile off the BMT.
  - October 4 (Monday) contact Hike Leader Clare Sullivan [hikeleaderCC2@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderCC2@bmtamail.org).
  - October 15 (Friday) contact Hike Leader Steve Dennison [hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org).
  - October 20 (Wednesday) contact Hike Leader Steve Dennison [hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org).
  - October 26 (Tuesday) contact Hike Leader Ann Anderson [hikeleaderAA@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderAA@bmtamail.org).

- ◆ **Unicoi Gap on the Benton MacKaye Trail to the Doc Rogers' House** - Strenuous 9 miles, 1,000' elevation change, with a beautiful ridge line walk along the NC/TN state line. Added attractions include an old, engraved stone marker on the ridge marking the state line and the ruins of the "old" Doc Rogers' House. Meetup location is at the Coker Creek Welcome Center, TN.  
**October 30** (Saturday) contact Hike Leader Phyllis Jones [hikeleaderPJ@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderPJ@bmtamail.org).

### North Carolina/Smoky Mountain Hikes

- ◆ **End of the BMT at Big Creek to end of AT Smoky Mountain Section at Davenport Gap** - Moderate/strenuous 5 miles. One-mile road walk on GSNP road to Chestnut Branch Trail up to the AT then down to Davenport Gap. Four miles 1800' gain and 1300' loss. Requires a short shuttle if not done as in an out for 10 miles.  
**October 23** (Friday) contact Hike Leaders Tom and Carolyn Sewell [hikeleaderTS@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderTS@bmtamail.org).
- ◆ **BMT Road to No Where "Tunnel to No Where" to Campsite #74** - Moderate 6.5 miles.  
**October 19** (Tuesday) contact Hike Leader Mike Pilvinsky [hikeleaderMP@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderMP@bmtamail.org).
- ◆ **Fontana Dam Area** - BMT/AT divergence near the end of Fontana Dam to same on the southside near the Marina. Easy three miles. Could be done as a shuttle or start at multiple accessible points and done as round trips of up to six miles. Parking is abundant, great views of the lake and possibly a visit to the Dam's Visitor center.  
**October 18** (Monday) contact Hike Leaders Tom and Carolyn Sewell [hikeleaderTS@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderTS@bmtamail.org).  
**October 29** (Friday) contact Hike Leader Steve Dennison [hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org).

Don't miss Larry Anderson's presentation at the Awards Banquet, November 13 at Unicoi Lodge!

***"Putting Match to the Fuse": Benton MacKaye and the Creation of American Hiking Trails"***

He will tie together stories of the Benton MacKaye Trail, Appalachian Trail, the Bay Circuit Trail and others.

And, if you have one of Larry Anderson's books, bring it to the meeting for

Saturday nite's book signing event.

Don't have a copy yet, get yours on Amazon!

[\*Benton MacKaye: Conservationist, Planner, and Creator of the Appalachian Trail\*](#)

**The deadline for the October Newsletter is Wednesday, September 29. Thank you!**