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### BMTA Officers 2022-2023

- President: Ken Cissna
- Vice President: Clare Sullivan
- Secretary: Judy Price
- Treasurer: Lydia Burns
- GA M/D: Bob Cowdrick
- TN/NC M/D: Nelson Ashbrook
- Smokies Coord: David Watkins
- Hiking Director: Kelly Motter
- Membership: Frank Forehand
- Communications: Joy Forehand
- Conservation: Patrick Ward
- Past President: Barry Allen
- Store: Sue Ricker
- Newsletter: Kathy Williams
- State Rep GA: Darcy Douglas
- State Rep TN/NC: Steve Barnes



**BMTA Headquarters**



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DECEMBER 2022

## Mill Creek Bridge

by Bob Cowdrick with photos courtesy of Clare Sullivan and Daphne Martin

The work that volunteers do on the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT) is not confined to removing blowdowns, lopping briars and cleaning out water diversions. At times section maintainers alert us to projects on the trail that need special attention. These may include re-routing the trail around beaver dams, adding steps on steep roads to trail access points and repairing bridges across creeks and streams.

One such project was the Mill Creek Bridge. On a very foggy November 12, with an enormous amount of effort and less than stellar weather, the old bridge was retired, and the new bridge was built. This structure will remain for future BMT hikers to appreciate and enjoy. Section 10a maintainer, Ben Yaun, is very happy that this bridge is now a BMT showcase.



Mike Pilvinsky in the water digging gravel.



Chuck Huey and Kenny Martin hauling lumber.

Thanks to Barry Allen, 'Construction Manager', and Gilbert Treadwell, 'Demolition Manager', we completed this project on budget and on time. Andy Meeks and Ian Guttridge's saw effort on the decking prep helped get the project off to a quick start.



Ben Yaun is our proverbial cheerleader and motivator. Mike Pilvinsky's excellent suggestion to bring a shovel and buckets gave him plenty to do. Ken Cissna assisted with the in-the-water effort. David Watkins supported the crew with good suggestions on how to do it better. Tom Acheson, Dale Clark, Chuck Huey, Steve Denison and Blake Godfrey made transporting the lumber into the site look easy.



Gilbert Treadwell pulling nails.



Chuck Huey, Dale Clark and David Watkins load a backpack.



Lisa Blackmer-Raynolds and Blake Godfrey hauled lumber.

Art Kolberg, Steve Smith, Ed Sullivan, Patrick Ward and Shane Morrison did an excellent job on sills, stringers and decking. Kenny Martin is our newly designated yellowjacket eradicator. Daphne Martin and Clare Sullivan never let us down by getting behind-the-scenes photos. Lisa Blackmer-Raynolds, Allison Martin and Madison Martin's hands on efforts with the skill saw and screw guns were superb.







A workday would not be complete without Chef Patty and her food social!

I asked our volunteers why they decided to join us on the work trip?

Their responses were varied:

- ◆ Work on a section of the BMT that I have never hiked.
- ◆ Learn new skills.
- ◆ Meet other BMTA volunteers and make new friends.
- ◆ Enjoy being outside on a beautiful day.
- ◆ A chance to give back to the trail.

All great responses but the common thread was a healthy boost to their self-confidence along with a sense of pride and identity.

This was the first work trip for three of the 26 volunteers who joined us on Saturday. All vowed to return.

I invite you to consider joining us on our next BMTA GA Maintenance Trip which will be on December 10, 2022. Check the [Calendar page](#) of the website for details/location.

The numbers speak for themselves:

- ◆ 300 board feet of lumber carried 1 mile to the creek
- ◆ 215 volunteer hours of effort
- ◆ 26 members and guests participated
- ◆ 20 feet of rebar used
- ◆ 15 feet of bridge constructed
- ◆ 10 pounds of deck screws used
- ◆ 5 very heavy 2 x 8's
- ◆ 1 new bridge
- ◆ 0 injuries

Members sometimes wonder how their dues and donations are being used. We budget carefully and spend the funds prudently on tools and projects such as the Mill Creek Bridge. Materials alone for this project including lumber, rebar, screws and bolts cost the association \$530. If you consider the time the volunteers spent on the project, the total cost would have exceeded \$5000 if done by a commercial contractor. Thus, your annual membership dues for the BMTA and the time you volunteer for Saturday workdays make projects like this possible and the results are much appreciated by the hikers on the trail.



Mill Creek Bridge!!

## Treasure of Memories, Love every Footprint Section 10a

by Larry Rice with photo by Stacy Rice

I have always had a love of nature and being outdoors since I was a kid, but I really didn't get seriously into hiking and camping until after my time in the Navy was over in 1972 when I joined my brothers and sister in the family business my dad had started.

During the seventies, we made frequent trips to Cumberland Island, staying at each campground many times. My brother and his friends made a book on the Cumberland and titled it *Treasure of Memories*, so I'm borrowing the name from them.

Okefenokee Swamp, the Everglades, Panther Creek Falls, Amicalola Falls and DeSoto Falls State Park were on our list as well. We also began frequent hikes and camping in the Cohutta Wilderness, hiking every trail within the area except the Rough Ridge Trail. We just didn't like the name of that one – even though the name “Tearbitches” didn't deter us from multiple hikes.

I had hiked on the Appalachian Trail (AT) just once when I read about a plan for a new trail that was to be created - the Benton Mackaye Trail. It would make a figure-eight loop with the AT. It would start in Georgia, then head through Tennessee into North Carolina. The trail would be created and maintained by volunteers.

I attended a meeting where I met George Owen and others who laid out the plans for the new trail. I was in! I was ready not only to build but also to maintain a section of Georgia trail.

Initial trips were made to flag the route which had to be approved by the Forest Service before construction could start. I remember some of the route being so thick and overgrown that George was leading the way with a chainsaw to get us through. Later, trips in the Wilderness Area prohibited the use of power tools so only loppers and bow saws were allowed!



Then came Section 10a (from Watson Gap to Dally Gap) with several creek crossings, an old homestead site and a beaver pond, terminating at the junction with Jacks River Trail. I knew this was the section I wanted to maintain. I volunteered immediately and was lucky enough to be chosen.

After nearly 40 years of loving every trip I made to keep the trail open, enjoying time in the woods with my wife and children (and my dog on many occasions) and many resharpenings of my bow saw, in 2018 I realized it was time to turn the privilege of taking care of what I had grown to call “my trail” over to someone else.



### The Treasure Continues - by Joy Forehand with Ben Yaun

Ben Yaun, the current Section Maintainer for 10a joined the Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA) in 2017. He soon became a regular on work trips and asked to maintain a section. His first assignment was Section 9c (Pate Gap >> Watson Gap).

"I was disappointed at first -- the section was only seven-tenths of a mile long," said Yaun. But I was determined to show them what a well-cared for section looks like – I had the trail so clean you could almost eat off it."

When 10a became available in 2019, Yaun jumped at the chance to take on the 2.6-mile section (Watson Gap » Jacks River Trail).

Yaun loved the new section. Despite noticeable bear activity, he frequently went out just to enjoy walking on the trail. Still, he wanted to let the bears know he was coming so he would sing as he hiked or worked ... "Delta Dawn" was one of his favorites.

At the end of a day of hiking or working on the trail, Yaun sometimes enjoyed a rather unique reward. The trees near a stream were perfect for a hammock where Yaun would enjoy an afternoon siesta – which sometimes included his waking up to see an inquisitive deer staring at him.

Maintaining the section now has become a family affair with Yaun's wife, Carol Huey and brother-in-law, Chuck Huey, pitching in to help. Earlier this year, the group was using a sling blade as they hiked the trail when they saw what they thought were blowdowns. Upon closer inspection, Yaun realized it was a beaver's dam.

"They just keep adding to it," said Yaun. "And now it looks like there's another one on down the trail."

And so as it did for Larry Rice, Section 10a's treasure of memories will continue to grow – taking leisurely hikes along the well-worn path, facing the frustrating challenge to outsmart those pesky beavers, clearing the trail of brush and blowdowns and enjoying the pleasure of chatting with thru/day hikers – now will fill a new treasure chest of memories for Ben, Carol and Chuck.



Ben with a blowdown.



Carol and her brother, Chuck, loaded down!





## Your Dues Help Us Maintain the BMT Join or Renew Your Membership Now!



- ◆ Membership fees & donations are the primary source of funds for preserving, protecting and maintaining the BMT.
- ◆ **Become a Member by Donation**—For a donation of \$50, \$100, \$250, \$500 or more, you will receive an Individual or Family Membership for 2023.
- ◆ **Donate to BMTA’s Land Acquisition Fund (LAF)** so we will be ready to act when a parcel that would be valuable for the trail corridor comes on the market.

[JOIN/RENEW](#)

[DONATE](#)

[DONATE—LAF](#)

*Memberships purchased between October 1 and December 31, 2022 will be good thru December 31, 2023.*



BMTA President Ken Cissna and thru hiker, Zigzag meet about 5 miles from finishing his hike. Zigzag is from Knoxville, Tennessee. Ken was leading a hike on the “Hickory Flats Loop”.  
Photo courtesy of Mike Pilvinsky.



It was a tough hike on Monday, November 28. We went out and back on the Benton MacKaye Trail -10.6 miles for two of us! The weather was great as we all started at Skenah Gap and hiked through to Wilscot Gap. Some chose to do 5.3 miles and others did the out and back. On the return trip, I met Tom, a 91-year-old section hiker from Indiana. He did not want his picture taken, but shared stories with us of his many back-packing trips.  
Courtesy of Kelly Motter



## Tool Care Supervisor Tom Mitchell

by Tom Mitchell and Joy Forehand

Tom Mitchell is the Benton MacKaye Trail Association's (BMTA) Georgia Tool Care Supervisor – he is the one who keeps the BMTA's trail tools in tip top shape.

When working, Mitchell's career revolved around law enforcement. Upon retiring, Mitchell found his niche in volunteering with the Forest Service as a Wilderness Ranger. In Vermont, he worked on the Appalachian Trail (AT). An unusual project, hikers were walking on old, rotted logs to cross a bald. The Vermont crew spent the summer tearing out a 100-yard section of the disintegrating logs and replaced them with rocks.

Mitchell honed his workshop skills when he built a couple of canoes, two airplanes (which he flew) – and he re-built an old, derelict sailboat.

Always the adventurer, Tom and his wife, Jan, planned to use the sailboat to sail around the world. Unfortunately, the boat had a few unknown problems and instead they sailed from shipyard to shipyard for repairs. In addition, the crew Tom hired were subject to seasickness and they “jumped ship”.

While anchored in St. Augustine, one of Jan's friends invited her to stay at their cabin in Blue Ridge. It must have been love at first sight because, when Jan returned to St. Augustine, she told Tom she had purchased a cabin on the lake in Morganton, Georgia.

Once in the North Georgia Mountains, Tom noticed some Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT) signs and contacted the association. He became the Section Maintainer for the Wallalah section, considered by many to be the most difficult section on the BMT.

He later moved on to become the Section Maintainer for 7c (Sisson Shelter >> Boardtown Road) and in 2011, he was named Trail Worker of the Year!



### Tom's Career as the Georgia Tool Care Supervisor

(as related by Tom)

When I joined the BMTA some twenty-odd years ago, the tools were kept in a rented storage unit. There was no organized system for storing, cleaning, or sharpening them but it was sometimes done on an ad hoc basis by individual users.

The tools were moved to a shed loaned to BMTA by Joe Sisson. The shed had a workbench and electricity where the tools could be cleaned and sharpened, and the tools were more or less organized at that point.

However, tool maintenance still was on an individual basis, with maintainers or work crew leaders taking it on themselves to care for the tools.

Seeing the need for tool care, I started taking care of the tools used on the work trips.

Continued next page



There was no official position for a BMTA tool maintainer, but since most of the people on the work trips drove from long distances, it made sense for a local to stay and clean up. So, I became the local who did just that. We soon moved the tools to what today is known as BMTA's Headquarters.

Ralph Heller and I cleaned the building. Ralph built the workbench and wooden tool rack we currently use. I did some floor repair and built the ladder to the attic. We both worked on the racks for the other tools.

With more space available I ordered a larger selection of hand tools for the shed. Once finished, I moved the tools from the old shed to the new Sisson shed and organized the tools the way you see them today.

Maintaining the tools is basically a three-step process.

The first is cleaning, which, depending on circumstances, can be the most difficult – especially if the work area was muddy. The maintainers are good about not bringing in tools heavily coated with mud, but the tools still may require considerable work. At the first tool shed, I had access to running water – which I do not have at Headquarters.

Now I primarily use a wire brush and rag. Things like sling blades, loppers, shovels, etc. are laid on a bench or held in a vice and are sharpened with a hand-held grinder. Other tools such as Pulaskis, are sharpened on a bench grinder and often require considerably more time as they have multiple cutting surfaces.



Incidentally, the bench grinder must never be turned on if any other electrical appliance is on – it will blow the circuit breaker!

Occasionally, other maintenance, such as replacing a broken handle on a Pulaski or tightening or replacing screws on sling blades also is undertaken. I frequently use a Sharpie to refresh the BMTA letters etched on the tools' handles. And, if necessary, I take a tool to my better-equipped home workshop to repair. Once the tools are cleaned and sharpened, they are sprayed with oil and placed in their proper location.

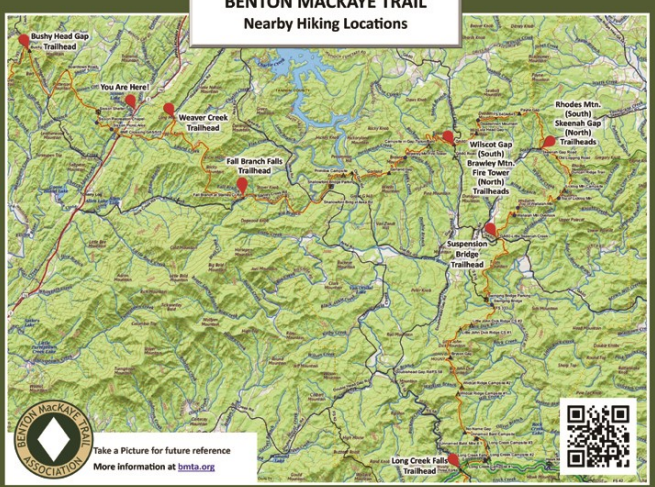


# New, at Headquarters

by Joy Forehand

### BENTON MACKAYE TRAIL

#### Nearby Hiking Locations



**Welcome to the Benton MacKaye Trail Association Headquarters!**

The trail is not here but we invite you to use the map to find the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT) hike that's right for you.

The secluded forest pathway has something for hikers of every persuasion—panoramic vistas, rushing waterfalls, meandering streams, historic bridges and more.

Day hikers love the half-mile-mile treks to Fall Branch Falls and Long Creek Falls. A variety of six — 12-mile hikes through the North Georgia Mountains are great for backpackers. And long distance hikers love the unmatched peaceful seclusion of the BMT. Visit BMTA's website, [bmta.org](http://bmta.org), for a variety of suggested hikes.

**BMTA Headquarters**

Built in the 1800s, the old log stables originally were located on the Atlanta-Knoxville Highway.

The stables were moved to the Sisson location and have been used by the BMTA as our Headquarters and work center.

In the early 1990s, Joe Sisson graciously agreed to allow the BMT to traverse the Sisson Development.

Take a Picture for future reference  
More information at [bmta.org](http://bmta.org)



<p><b>Bushy Head Gap</b></p> <p>Go east on Hwy 76/515 to the junction of Lucie Road. Turn right onto Lucie Rd. Drive 1.9 miles to Bushyhead Gap. Turn right. Continue for 0.4 miles to the intersection with Bushyhead Gap Rd. on the left. Turn left on Bushyhead Gap Rd. Travel 1.6 miles. The trailhead is on the left, just past Oak Drive, about 20 feet west of a large group of mailboxes. The trailhead is a short distance past the Oak Drive turnoff to a forest road which intersects from the left.</p>	<p><b>Fall Branch Falls</b></p> <p>Go east on Hwy 76/515 into Blue Ridge. Turn right at the stop light at the Conoco Station. Go one block to the dead end and at old US 76. Turn left. Continue for one block to Asha Rd. Turn right. Follow Asha Rd. for 1.2 miles. Turn right onto Stanley Creek Road. Go 3.1 miles to the Fall Branch Falls Trailhead.</p>	<p><b>Long Creek Falls</b></p> <p>Go east on Hwy 76/515 into Blue Ridge. Turn right at the stop light at the Conoco Station. Go one block to the dead end and at old US 76. Turn left. Continue for one block to Asha Rd. Turn right. Follow Asha Rd. for 1.2 miles. Turn right onto Sheenah Mt. Falloweys Rd. For 0.2 miles and turn left onto Doubledated Gap Rd. In 0.7 miles, turn right onto Forest Service Rd. 62. Follow for approximately 3 miles until you reach the Long Creek Falls Trailhead.</p>	<p><b>Sheenah Gap/Rhodes Mountain Trailhead</b></p> <p>Go east on Hwy 76/515 east through Blue Ridge — continue 4.0 miles to the intersection with GA 60 that leads to Morganton, GA. At just under 10 miles, the first crossing of GA 60 by the BMT will be seen at Wilcox Gap. Continue for 1.5 miles on GA 60 to the junction with Sheenah Gap Road. Turn left and travel for another 1.5 miles to the Sheenah Gap Rhodes trailhead. The BMT sign is on the right side of the road. Limited parking is available on the shoulder of the road. Hiking south leads to the Little Sheenah Creek Crossing on GA 60. Hiking north leads to Wilcox Gap.</p>
<p><b>Suspension Bridge</b></p> <p>Go east on Hwy 76/515 through Blue Ridge — continue 4.0 miles to the intersection with GA 60 that leads to Morganton, GA. At just under 10 miles, the first crossing of GA 60 by the BMT will be seen at Wilcox Gap. From the Wilcox Gap access, continue for 3.5 miles on GA 60 to the location with Sheenah Gap Road. Stop on GA 60 0.2 miles to the Little Sheenah Creek/Suspension Bridge trailhead. A small parking lot is located on the north side of the highway. Please note: It is very close to the highway. Be careful when backing out onto the highway.</p>	<p><b>Weaver Creek</b></p> <p>Go east on Hwy 76/515 into Blue Ridge. Turn right at the stop light at the Conoco Station and go one block to the dead end at old US 76. Turn left. Continue for one block to Asha Road. Turn right. Follow Asha Rd. for about one mile to Weaver Creek Rd. Turn right. Follow Weaver Creek Rd. for four miles until the government ends. Limited parking is available on the right.</p>	<p><b>Wilcox Gap/Brawley Mountain Fire Tower Trailheads</b></p> <p>Go east on Hwy 76/515 through Blue Ridge — continue 4.0 miles to the intersection with GA 60 that leads to Morganton, GA. Turn right and continue on GA 60 through Morganton toward Sufferin and Zandbergen. At just under 10 miles, the first crossing of GA 60 by the BMT will be seen at Wilcox Gap. Continue for 1.5 miles on GA 60 to the junction with Sheenah Gap Road. Turn left and travel for another 1.5 miles to the Sheenah Gap Rhodes trailhead. The BMT sign is on the right side of the road. Limited parking is available on the shoulder of the road. Hiking south leads to the Little Sheenah Creek Crossing on GA 60. Hiking north leads to Wilcox Gap.</p>	

August 23, 2022

The Benton MacKaye Trail Association's (BMTA) Smokies Coordinator David Watkins and Conservation Director Patrick Ward are adroit at spotting needs that haven't been addressed by the association.

While stopping by BMTA's Headquarters to pick up tools, Watkins and Ward met several hikers who were looking for information on where to hike in the area — but there was no information on Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT) hikes or directions to the trailheads at Headquarters.

Their first suggestion was a "local" map of the BMT to be hung in the window where a somewhat dilapidated picture of the Suspension Bridge hung. The map would show the trailheads between Long Creek Falls and Bushyhead Gap. It also would include directions to many of the trailheads.

Their second suggestion was to post pictures of local BMT hike destinations combined with directions to the respective destinations in the other window.

Both projects have been completed and the pictures now are hung in the windows at BMTA's Headquarters.

Thank you, David and Patrick!

### BENTON MACKAYE TRAIL

#### Nearby Scenic Hiking Locations



**Welcome to the Benton MacKaye Trail Association Headquarters!**

Many of the BMT's best hiking locations are in the North Georgia Mountains of Amman and Gilmer counties.

**Benton MacKaye Plaque** — Installed in 1997, the bronze plaque (pictured above) honors the man for whom the trail is named, Benton MacKaye, in 0.1 of a mile from the Springer Mountain Trailhead — the Southern terminus of the BMT.

**Brawley Fire Tower** — No longer in use, it is a relic of the days before aircraft were used for spotting fires. Microwave towers now are attached to the original structure. Two US Geologic Survey Markers are below the tower.

**Fall Branch Falls** — It's an easy half-mile hike to this 100-foot waterfall — perfect paint for all, but especially for the kids.

**Long Creek Falls** — Day hikers love the voluminous cascades of whitewater rushing down the 50-foot sheer rock cliff.

**Owen Vista** — This stunning overlook is named for founding member George Owen who discovered it. The vista features breath-taking views to the southeast of the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountain Range.

**Shadow Falls** — This falls is a well hidden jewel in the lush forest of the Chattahoochee. Cascades of whitewater rush down the rock cliff. From Dyer Gap, go north on BMT 0.7 of a mile to the South Fork trail (FT). Falls are 0.3 of a mile south on SFT.

**Suspension Bridge Over the Toccoa River** — Completed in 1977, the 260-foot suspension footbridge over the Toccoa River was financed and approved by the US Forest Service — as well as by some financial support from the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club. It is said to be the longest suspension bridge in Georgia. Along the trail to the bridge, Toccoa Mountain offers awesome views of the valley to the east and the valley to the west below.

**The Bald** — At 3,250 feet, The Bald is the highest point on BMT Section 2a. The secluded woods and pathway opens up to a beautiful open field known as The Bald.



bmta.org

 <p><b>Owen Vista</b></p> <p>4 miles from the Big Stamp Trailhead</p>	 <p><b>The Bald</b></p> <p>2.1 miles from the Three Forks Trailhead</p>	
 <p><b>Fall Branch Falls</b></p> <p>5 Miles from Fall Branch Trailhead</p>	 <p><b>Suspension Bridge Over the Toccoa River</b></p> <p>1.5 Miles from GA Hwy 60/Little Sheenah Creek Trailhead. The bridge also can be reached via US 816 which is across from the GA Hwy 60/Little Sheenah Creek Trailhead. The bridge is one quarter-mile from where US 816 ends at the parking area near the bridge.</p>	 <p><b>Brawley Fire Tower</b></p> <p>3.2 Miles GA Hwy 50/Wilcox Gap Trailhead</p>
 <p><b>Shadow Falls</b></p> <p>The side trail to the falls is one mile from the Dyer Gap Trailhead.</p>	 <p><b>Long Creek Falls</b></p> <p>0.8 miles from the Three Forks Trailhead</p>	

One of the BMTA crews of volunteers who keep the trail in top shape. Just off to the right, you'll find more information on how you can help. go to [bmta.org/about-us/contacts](http://bmta.org/about-us/contacts).





### Make It a Benton MacKaye Trail Christmas with a Gift from the BMTA Trail Store



Shop the [Trail Store](#) Now!

### Amazon Smile Benefits BMTA

If you are going to make purchases from Amazon please use this address: BMTA's unique link is [http:// smile.amazon.com/ch/58-1428009](http://smile.amazon.com/ch/58-1428009).

If you do so, Amazon will direct a small share of your purchases to BMTA.



### Quest for National Scenic Trail

#### Our Continued Success Depends on YOU!

– If You Love the BMT and You Live in the United States –  
Please ask your Senators/Representative to support our quest.

Ask your friends and family to contact their  
Congressional representatives as well.

Use the links below to find your Senators/Representative.

[Senator](#)

[Representative](#)



## Boy Scouts Learn About Nuisance Bears

by Clare Sullivan

Applause is in order for Boy Scout Troop 118 (nickname – Hogsnakes) from Keith Memorial United Methodist Church in Athens, Tennessee. This is the third year the Hogsnakes have assisted with a Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA) maintenance trip. Seven Scouts, two Scout leaders and 13 BMTA volunteers used loppers, swingblades, a handsaw and a crosscut saw to work their way along the Benton MacKaye Trail from Beech Gap to Bob Bald.

The Scouts' first assignment came from Ed Sullivan who had each Scout sharpen the tool he would be using.

Their first lesson for the day focused on “Wilderness Areas”. Clare Sullivan pointed out the five-sided wooden sign denoting a Wilderness Area. When they reached the metal signs along the Citico Wilderness border, Rick Harris continued the lesson. The Scouts were surprised to learn that Wilderness Areas are designated by the United States Congress. These areas are governed by specific rules for the type blazing permitted as well as the requirement that only non-motorized tools may be used.

A huge 200-year-old American Chestnut tree was the perfect location for the next lesson. Chestnuts are noted for being resistant to rot – the tree had fallen about 60 years ago. While the Scouts rested, Harris enumerated the many uses of Chestnut wood in the past.

The third lesson was about Bear Preserves for nuisance bears. Harris explained that problem bears in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP) are “tagged” for their first offense. The second time a bear is found to be a nuisance, it is moved to a Bear Reserve on Brush Mountain or on Frog Mountain in the Cherokee National Forest. If a bear wanders back to the GSMNP and gets in trouble a third time, it is euthanized.



The first blowdown on the trail was the setting for the next lesson – the history of crosscut saws as told by Rick Harris.

Other lessons included information about the Forest Service planting fir trees on top of Bob Bald by Ken Jones and a review of the seven Leave No Trace Principles.

At the end of the workday, Scouts and BMTA volunteers gathered at the Unicoi Crest parking area to enjoy the delicious cuisine specially prepared by Chef Patty.



# Where's Mom?

by Kathy Williams

Text from my son, "Hey Mom. Where are you?"

"I've been hiking in the Smokies at the Benton MacKaye Hike Fest. Yesterday we hiked to some cemeteries. We learned about the Road to Nowhere too. It probably should have been titled 'Fright Fest' since we went to so many cemeteries. I hope these dead people are not mad about our visiting."

"What is the Road to Nowhere?"

"It was supposed to go to cemeteries when they built Fontana Dam but it was not doable, so they got a bunch of money instead. You can still go to the cemeteries; you just have to go via a Forest Service Road and do some hiking. Dick Evans took us on the first day's hike. He knows where all the bodies are buried. He told us that the white folks are buried facing east due to religious beliefs in the resurrection. The black folks are buried facing north since that represented freedom."



"We started our hike at Fontana Dam. Ha, there are Life Rings along the top of the dam. I wondered if they ever had to use them? One never knows. After all we were going to cemeteries. Hope a disgruntled ghost doesn't push one of us over!"



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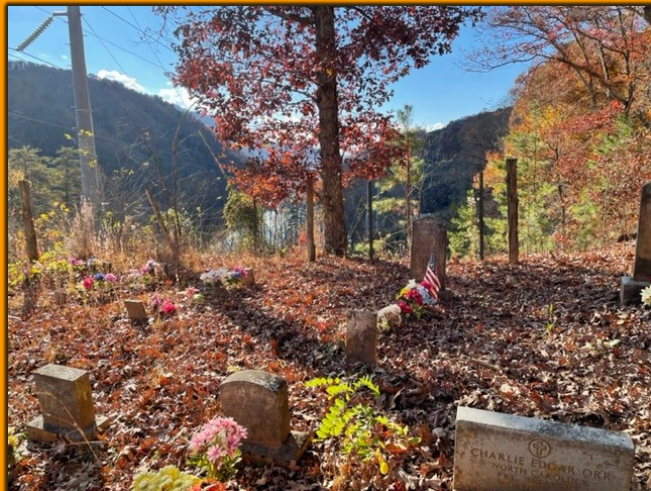
“The lake was really low. This was due to maintenance work on the dam as well as some preemptive lowering in anticipation of Hurricane Ian dumping large amounts of water in the area in the weeks before.”







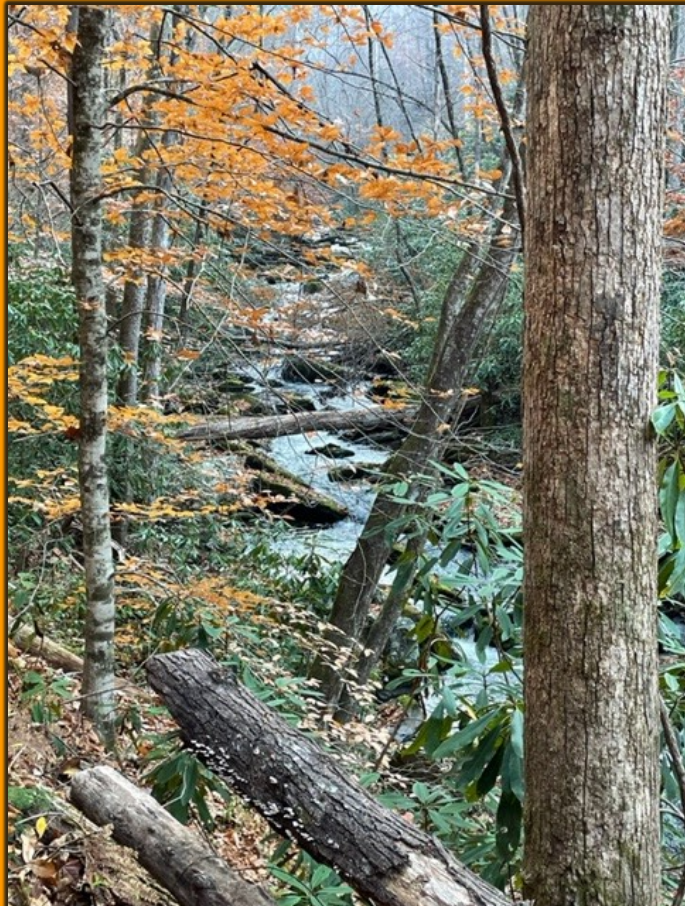
“We had great weather for the hike. I was glad it was not gray and gloomy - not real keen on tromping around cemeteries in dreary weather. We came upon something I had never seen before - a trap for wild hogs. It seems they are an issue. Our second cemetery had a great view of the river.”



“At the end of our hike Dick treated us to wine, cheese and crackers! A small waterfall added to the ambiance!”



“The next day our illustrious president, Ken Cissna, and “BMTA Curmudgeon”, George Owen led us on a hike to Twenty Mile Trail and the Twenty Mile Cascades. I was in a car following them to the trailhead. They got lost. We ended up at Deal’s Gap where the infamous Tail of the Dragon starts. Ken did get out and ask for directions even though he is a man.”





“The last day of hiking was to some more cemeteries and the abandoned town of Proctor. By now my legs were feeling like the ‘Walking Dead’. I shouldn't have gone with your sister to Mount LeConte the weekend before Hike ‘Fright Fest’. My legs said the next time I wanted to do this much hiking to leave them at home. This time the cemeteries were across the lake. We took a ferry to access the Lakeshore Trail. The ferry had a small leak in the hull, so the boat guy asked us to sit in the back of the boat. The BMT is also there.”







“The Proctors, who built the town, had an impressive gravesite. This was the last cemetery we visited. The Calhoun House is still standing. So now you know where your mom has been lately. Just wandering around the woods in search of bodies!”



## Upcoming Hikes and Work Trips

Thanks to Tom Sewell, our Hiking Director the past two years, for putting these together. Our new Hiking Director is Kelly Motter.

### Guidelines for Our Hikes

**COVID-19 Concerns** - If you believe you are in a high-risk group, please evaluate whether going on this hike is worth the potential risk.

### December

**December 7** (Wednesday) Nantahala Forest in South Carolina. Bad Creek Trailhead to Lower Whitewater Falls. Easy to moderate 4.2 miles with a possible side trip to Upper Whitewater Falls which at over 800 feet of drop is the highest waterfall east of the Rockies. Meet up location is Oconee State Park, South Carolina. Contact Hike Leader Mike Pilvinsky at [hikeleaderMP@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderMP@bmtamail.org).

**December 9** (Friday) Hemp Top/BMT to Double Springs Gap and return. Moderately strenuous 10 miles. Contact Hike Leader Steve Dennison at [hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org).



**December 10** (Saturday) GA Maintenance Trip. Sections 2 & 3 – Suspension Bridge >> Skeenah Gap. Register online at <https://bmta.org/events/december-10-ga-work-trip/> or contact Bob Cowdrick at [bcowdrick@comcast.net](mailto:bcowdrick@comcast.net).

**December 12** (Monday) BMT: Dally Gap to Jack's River and back. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Moderate 5 miles. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [hikeleaderKCbmta-mail.org](mailto:hikeleaderKCbmta-mail.org).

**December 14** (Wednesday) BMT: Watson Gap to Jack's River Trail intersection to Hemp Top to Dally Gap and return. Moderate 8 miles. Contact Hike Leader Steve Dennison at [hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org).



**December 17** (Saturday) N/NC Maintenance Trip. 12E FS 103 to FS 173 Trestle Register online at <https://bmta.org/events/december-17-tn-nc-maintenance-trip/> or contact Steve Cartwright, [scdcmc@comcast.net](mailto:scdcmc@comcast.net).

### January

**January 1** (Sunday) Upper Springer Mountain Loop. This 5-mile loop treks to the southern terminus of both the Appalachian and Benton MacKaye trails and includes two lovely vistas. Start the first day of 2023 with a great hike! Contact Hike Leader Michael Pilvinsky at [hikeleaderMP@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderMP@bmtamail.org).

**January 11** (Wednesday) BMT: Bushy Head Gap to McKenny and return. Moderately/strenuous 8 miles. Contact Hike Leader Steve Dennison at [hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org).



**January 14** (Saturday) GA Maintenance Trip. TBA. Contact Bob Cowdrick at [gamaintdirector@bmtamail.org](mailto:gamaintdirector@bmtamail.org).



**January 16** (Monday) Thunder Rock Express to Chestnut Mountain Trail to BMT down to Thunder Rock Campground. Moderate 6.5 miles. Whitewater Center in Ducktown, Tennessee. Contact Hike Leaders Tom and Carolyn Sewell at [hikeleaderTS@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderTS@bmtamail.org).

**January 20** (Friday) BMT from Three Forks to No Name Bald and back. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Moderate 4.3 miles. Mostly following Long Creek. Largely uphill going and reverse returning. Approximately 700' of elevation change each way. We'll include a side trip to Long Creek Falls. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [hikeleaderKCbmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderKCbmtamail.org).

**January 24** (Tuesday) BMT Dyer Gap to Shadow Falls to Pinhoti Trail intersection. Then return to Dyer Gap, southbound to Flat Top Mountain. Moderately/ strenuous 7 miles. Contact Hike Leader Steve Denison at [hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org).

To access our website calendar, go [HERE](#).



**Just In!** George Owen will once again offer his class, **Hiking in the Southern Appalachians**. Classes are held at Young Harris College through the Institute of Continued Learning (ICL) in Young Harris, Georgia.

Class is held on Mondays from 10 am to 12 noon beginning January 23 and lasting eight weeks. Often George will take the class on a hike afterwards. The cost is \$20. For more information and registration go to the Institute for Continued Learning at [ICL](#).



# Happy Holidays!!! Merry Christmas!

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