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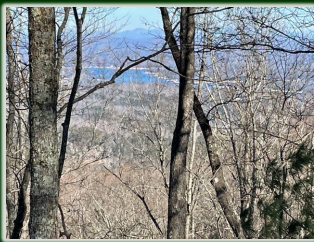
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BMTA Headquarters



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1,000 Mile Challenge!

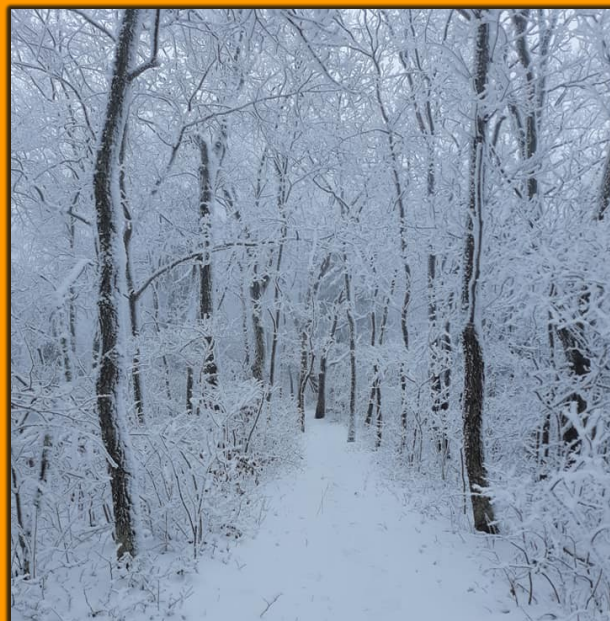
by Joy Forehand

The Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA), the Alabama Pinhoti Trail Association (APTA) and the Georgia Pinhoti Trail Association have joined together to offer a new long-distance hike – the 1,000 Mile Challenge!

The Challenge was created to showcase the beauty of the Southern Appalachian Mountains in Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee and North Carolina. The 13 Wilderness Areas through which the Challenge passes offer the hiker a unique, peaceful solitude not found in other forest settings.

The route for the Challenge includes:

- ◆ The Appalachian Trail (AT) (Davenport Gap >> Springer Mountain) (The Chestnut Branch Trail (Big Creek >> Davenport Gap) is used to connect the AT and BMT.)
- ◆ The BMT (Springer Mountain >> Big Creek)
- ◆ The Pinhoti National Recreation Trail (PNRT) (Flagg Mountain >> the intersection with the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT near Dyer Gap)



BMT's Big Frog in snow finery.
Courtesy of Karen Attaway.

These trails are among the premiere hiking destinations in the Deep South. The route forms a lollipop – hikers may begin/end at any point on the route. The associations will recognize both thru and section hikes.

The history of the BMT, PNRT and AT dates back to 1921 when visionary forester Benton MacKaye first proposed the route for the AT. His map included two spur routes – one extending the AT into Alabama and one extending the AT into Georgia.

Continued next page

As the grandfather of long-distance trails, the AT now stretches from Springer Mountain in Georgia to Mount Katahdin in Maine.

The BMT's route is similar to MacKaye's spur route into Georgia. The trail comes down the spine of the Smokies, extends into the Cohuttas and then heads southeast to its southern terminus on Springer Mountain in Georgia.

The PNRT's route resembles MacKaye's spur route into Alabama. Beginning on Flag Mountain in Alabama, the PNRT heads northeastward across Alabama and into Georgia. Its northern terminus is at the PNRT's intersection with the BMT near Dally Gap.



The view from Blood Mountain on the AT. BMTA photo.



Whitley Dasinger at the Calhoun Overlook on the Pinhoti.
Photo by Adam Dansinger

Secluded forest pathways, exquisite panoramic vistas and glistening snow-white water waterfalls are the hallmark of all three trails.

Preacher's Rock near Woody Gap, Blood Mountain, Wesser Bald and Clingman's Dome are a few of the highlights along the AT.

Well-known landmarks on the BMT include: Owen Vista, the iconic Swinging Bridge, Upper Bald River Falls, Whigg Meadow and the Mount Sterling Fire Tower.

On the PNRT, Calhoun Overlook, Little Hillabee Waterfall, the Wormy Pulpit, Keowan Falls and Sweet Birch Canyon are a backpacker's delight.

BMTA will provide a complimentary BMT patch and 1,000-Miler rocker for hikers who complete the Challenge.

To receive their complimentary patch and rocker from the BMTA, hikers who have completed the Challenge, should go to the [COMPLETION REPORT & REQUEST FOR LISTING](#).

To receive their CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION from APTA, hikers should contact [Adam Dasinger](#) with the Alabama Pinhoti Trail Association.





Time to Join or Renew Your Membership!



-- *Leave a footpath for generations to follow.* --

To Join or to Renew your membership, go to:

[Membership!](#)

To Donate, go to:

[Donate!](#)

Membership fees & donations are the primary source of funds for preserving & protecting the BMT.

For a donation of \$50, \$100, \$250, \$500, you will receive an Individual or Family Membership for 2022.

The BMTA 5 Awards and Stats

by Bob Cowdrick

You may have heard of awards such as the Emmy's, Grammy's, Billboard, Academy Awards, etc. But have you heard of the **BMTA 5 Awards**?

These prestigious awards went to the top five crews working on January 8. The winners were:

- ◆ Patrick, Joe, Cory, Brian and Shane get the award for the **Most Miles Hiked**, making it from Dally to Double Springs Gap and back. Well done!
- ◆ Barry, Steve, David and Steve are recipients of the **Distance Award**. Hiking is easy but add some lopping and brushing - it's a different story!
- ◆ Dave, Sue, Whitney and John are the winners of **Most Trees Removed Award**, with 27 blowdowns removed off the trail. Sue and Whitney are personally taking credit for 26 of those!
- ◆ Gilbert, Ed, Clare, Dale and Gary received the **Fellow Crew Appreciation Award**, for working their section and cutting two trees on another crew's work section (George thanks you, Ed and Gilbert for doing that).
- ◆ George, Ken, Dale and Bob are the recipients of the **Equestrian Directional Award**, for posting signs that keep the horses on the right trail. Hope the horses can read?



Continued next page



The stats were impressive! On January 8, 2022, we had....

Five Crews consisting of:

- ◆ **23 BMTA Members and Guests** attended
- ◆ **212 Volunteer Hours** while hiking
- ◆ **158 Total Miles** and taking
- ◆ **395,000 Steps!**

You can add 21 degrees, sunny, two inches of snow and zero injuries to those stats! It was a beautiful day to be outside!

The next BMTA GA Trail Work Day will be Saturday, February 12. We will offer work on three sections, Section 1a, 1b and 7b.

We look forward to seeing you there!

New Year, New Beginnings!

by Joy Forehand, photos from the Shermans

Martha Black of Louisville, Georgia, and David Sherman of Asheville, North Carolina, were married New Year's Day. The two exchanged vows at Martha's cabin in Cashiers, North Carolina, where an exquisite view of the mountains made it the perfect venue for their wedding.

The two first met in the 70s when they worked for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. They remained good friends through the years ... until ... 2021 when their friendship blossomed into a romance.

David is well-known to BMTAers as the Founding Father of the Benton MacKaye Trail. His never-ending persistence and passionate enthusiasm united government workers and volunteers alike to work towards the common goal of creating the wilderness trail now known as the Benton MacKaye Trail.





Join Us for a Winter Work Trip

GA Work Trip—February 12, 2022

Crew 1: Section 1a and b — Springer Mountain >> 2nd Cross Trails
Clean out water diversions and tread improvement.

Crew 2: Section 7b — GA 515 >> Sisson Shelter
Restoration and reconstruction on 7b

[Register for the Georgia Trip Now!](#)

To help us plan, please sign up early!

[Register for a TN/NC Trip Now!](#)

TN/NC Work Trip—February 26, 2022

Section 19c (Stairway to Heaven >> Reflector Tower)

Saw out blowdowns. Brushout beginning at reflector tower - heading NOBO for a half-mile.



Wilscot Gap to Skeenah Gap Goes to the Dogs

From Greg Redman



Greg Redman, Lisa Daubner and Mike Daubner with Daisy, Pansy and Sassy "Orange Up!"



Little Skeenah Creek



YOU Can Help Make the Benton MacKaye Trail the 12th National Scenic Trail!

Contact your Congressional Representative

*Let your representative know why you believe the BMT
should be designated as a National Scenic Trail.*

To learn more, go to [representative](#).



Nippy, But Shiny on the Amadahy Trail!

On a beautiful Monday morning, 14 hikers went on a great hike via the Amadahy Trail by Carter's Lake. The weather was beautiful. It was a tad nippy at the beginning, but the sun shone on us 'perfect people'. We had a great time and I enjoyed being with everyone on the hike.

Thank you everyone!
Evelin

TN/NC Work Trip Section 19

From Clare Sullivan



Perhaps this is really why we maintain the trail. Photo courtesy of James Anderson.



Wait. There's a Hilton on this work trip?! Donated by Papa Smurf? Mushrooms must be involved.

Continued next page



Simply stunning! Courtesy of James Anderson.



REAL Mountain Men work in the winter.

Welcome Georgia Section Maintainers!

by Bob Cowdrick

We are pleased to welcome Steve Dennison and Joe Cantwell as Georgia Section Maintainers.



Steve Dennison



Joe Cantwell

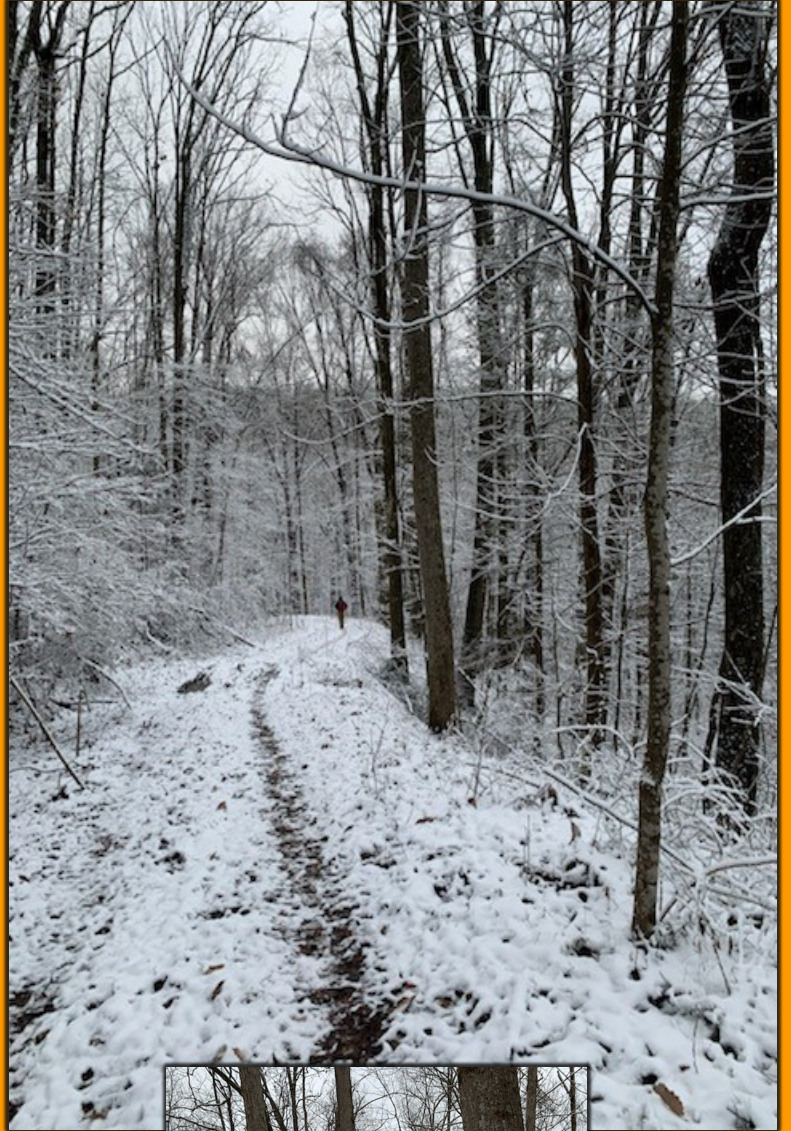
Steve Dennison is a dedicated hike leader as well as the maintainer of Section 14b in Tennessee. While enjoying a hike in the Cohuttas, the 1.5 miles of Section 10b's rolling hills between Jacks River Trail and Hemp Top captured his heart – so much so he volunteered to maintain Georgia's 10b as well.

Joe Cantwell currently maintains Sections 12a and 12b in Tennessee. When asked if he would survey Sections 10c and 10d for blowdowns this month, he agreed. While scouting those sections and clearing blowdowns, he decided to adopt those sections also!

Steve and Joe are “sandwiched” between Ben Yaun and Carol Huey on Section 10a and Brian Trinkle on Section 11a. Please give a shout out of “thanks” to them the next time you see them!

It's a Snow Day on the BMT!

by Clare and Ed Sullivan



Thunder Rock Express

by Tom Sewell



On January 19, we hiked a fun combination of trails starting from the Thunder Rock campground in Tennessee.

We trekked 5.3 miles, using the Thunder Rock Express/Chestnut/BMT trails to form a loop. Our journey gave us about 800' of elevation gain and loss.

There were several interesting points along the way, including the mysterious brick/block/board pile. This pile has spawned stories of college initiations - but no one really knows the origins of this strange mound.

Another sight we encountered was a bark-scratched tree.

At the conclusion of the hike we enjoyed the beautiful, new bridge near the Ocoee River built by the 2021 Youth Corps for the Ocoee District of the Cherokee National Forest.

Welcome 2022 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!



ADHA



AMVETS POST 911
POLK COUNTY, TN



CELEBRATE BLUE RIDGE
CABIN RENTALS



GEORGIA FOREST WATCH



HISTORIC TAPECO LODGE



MOUNTAIN WISDOM CAMP



Steve Dennison, on the trail from Bushy Head Gap to McKenny Gap. One week after the snowfall there still was enough to delight!!



A dusting at dusk.

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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 - 2022.

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.

February

February 7 (Monday) Vogel State Park: Trail from the visitors' center to Blood Mountain and return 8.5 miles with 2,000' elevation change each way. Moderate with some strenuous sections. Hike Leader Steve Dennison. For more information contact hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org.

February 11 (Friday) Talking Rock Nature Preserve. A dog friendly hike (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Utilizes various loops in the Talking Rock Nature Preserve. We plan for five easy miles, but you may decide to add more if you wish after the hike. Hike Leader Ken Cissna. For more information contact hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org.



February 12 (Saturday) GA Work - Trip Two sections available:

Section 1a and b (Springer Mountain >> 2nd Cross trails)

Section 7b (GA 515 >> Sisson Shelter)

Contact Bob Cowdrick bcowdrick@comcast.net.

February 21 (Monday) Duncan Ridge Trail: Mulky Gap to Sarvis Gap and return. Strenuous 8.2 miles. Hike Leader Steve Dennison. For more information contact hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org.

February 23 (Wednesday) Upper Springer Mountain Loop from Big Stamp Gap. This 4.6-mile loop provides visits to the southern terminus of both the Appalachian and Benton MacKaye trails on Springer Mountain, an AT shelter, the beginning of the BMT, the plaque honoring Benton MacKaye and Owen Vista. Hike Leader Gilbert Treadwell. For more information contact hikeleaderGT@bmtamail.org.

February 24 (Thursday) BMT Dial Road to Brawley Mountain and return. Moderate 5.3 miles round trip/1,100' elevation change each way. Some great views atop Brawley Mountain. Hike Leaders Carolyn and Tom Sewell. For more information contact hikeleaderTS@bmtamail.org.



February 26 (Saturday) TN/NC Work Trip. Section 19c (Stairway to Heaven >> Gap-Reflector tower). Contact Keith Mertz keithmertz@hotmail.com.

March

March 4 (Friday) Buck Bald: BMT from TN Hwy 68 and road walk to Buck Bald and return. Moderate 4 miles. Hike Leader Steve Dennison. For more information, contact hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org.

March 7 (Monday) BMT to Wallallah Mountain: GA Hwy 60 from Skeenah Creek to Wallallah Mountain then intersect with Duncan Ridge Trail and return. Strenuous 10 miles. Hike Leader Steve Dennison. For more information contact hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org.



March 12 (Saturday) GA Work Trip Sections 3a-b-c (GA 60 >> Skeenah Gap). Contact Bob Cowdrick bcowdrick@comcast.net.

March 14 (Monday) Benton MacKaye, Hemp Top and Jacks River trails. We will start hiking from Watson Gap, enter the Cohutta Wilderness on the BMT, then use the Hemp Top and Jacks River trails to complete a circle and return with a 2.6 repeat of the BMT to Watson Gap again. About 8.3 moderately/strenuous miles. Hike Leaders Carolyn and Tom Sewell. For more information contact hikeleaderCS@bmtamail.org.

March 18 (Friday) BMT/AT: Upper two loops on Springer Mountain from Big Stamp Gap. Dog friendly hike (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). About 5 moderate miles. See all the sights: Springer Mountain, an AT shelter, the beginning of the BMT, the plaque honoring Benton MacKaye and Owen Vista! Hike Leader Ken Cissna. For more information contact hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org.

March 21 (Monday) BMT Weaver Creek including short side trip to Rocky Mountain to Fall Branch Falls and return. Strenuous 12 miles. Hike Leader Steve Dennison. For more information contact hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org.

March 24 (Thursday) AT/BMT Loop from Three Forks to Hickory Flats to No Name Bald and back to Three Forks after a stop at Long Creek Falls. Moderate 7.6 miles. Hike Leader Gilbert Treadwell. For more information contact hikeleaderGT@bmtamail.org.



March 26 (Saturday) TN/NC Work Trip Section 18e (Yellowhammer Gap>>Tapoco Lodge) Contact Keith Mertz keithmertz@hotmail.com.

March 30 (Wednesday) Caney Creek Historical Community. Moderate 7 miles.

One large creek crossing to the abandoned historical community of Caney Creek on the Ocoee River. See lots of artifacts. This tiny town had mass transit, bathtubs, electric streetlights, concrete sidewalks, tennis courts, hotel, telephones, school and church but no stores. It existed from 1918-1941. No automobiles ever travelled there. For more information Google Caney Creek, TN. Be prepared for an hour's drive on FS Road 221 in the Cherokee National Forest.

Hike Leaders Clare and Ed Sullivan. For more information contact hikeleaderCS2@bmtamail.org

April

April 1(Friday) BMT to Rock Creek Trail in the Cherokee National Forest.

Begin at Thunder Rock parking for hikers, across Hwy 64, up the BMT to the Rock Creek Trail. Hike 7-8 miles back to Hwy 64. A few creek crossings and nice views. Short Shuttle. Moderate hike. Hike Leaders Clare and Ed Sullivan. For more information contact hikeleaderCS2@bmtamail.org

April 4 (Monday) Thunder Rock Express on to Chestnut Mountain Trail to BMT down to Thunder Rock Campground. Moderate 5.3 miles. Whitewater Center in Ducktown, Tennessee. Hike Leaders Evelin and Doug Yarns. For more information contact hikeleaderEY@bmtamail.org.

April 6 (Wednesday) Long Branch Connector off Aska Road to Lake Blue Ridge via the Green Mountain Trail and return. Moderate 11 miles. Hike Leader Steve Dennison.

For more information contact hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org.

April 8 (Friday) Flat Creek Loop: Dog friendly hike (adult humans may bring a leashed dog) Moderate 5.6 miles. Nice loop hike featuring Flat Creek.

Hike Leader Ken Cissna. For more information contact hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org.



April 9 (Saturday) GA Work Trip Sections 4a-b (Skeenah Gap >> Wilscot Gap). Contact Bob Cowdrick bcowdrick@comcast.net.

April 18 (Monday) Wildcat Creek/Turner Trail Loop with side trip to Rocky Ford Cascades. Approximately 8 miles with brief steep segments. Hiking poles recommended. Trail located in GA Wildlife Management Area and requires carrying a free GA Lifetime Sportsman license for Georgia residents over 65 or obtaining a permit through the GA Department of Natural Resources. Hike Leader Steve Dennison. For more information contact hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org.

April 22 (Friday) BMT - Hudson Gap, out and back. Dog friendly hike (adult humans may bring a leashed dog) moderate 4-5 miles. Come out to see spring wildflowers. Hike Leader Ken Cissna.

For more information contact hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org.



April 23 (Saturday) TN/NC Work Trip Section 18e (Yellowhammer Gap >> Tapoco Lodge) Contact Keith Mertz keithmertz@hotmail.com.

April 25 (Monday) Park Creek/Park Ridge Trails, Standing Indian area near Franklin, North Carolina. Moderate 5-mile hike with several creek crossings. There will be beautiful spring flowers to admire. Hike Leaders Carolyn and Tom Sewell. For more information contact hikeleaderCS@bmtamail.org.

April 27 (Wednesday) Lady Slippers! Mulky Gap. Blairsville. Easy /moderate 1.5 miles. Before embarking on the hike, hikers will go across the road to see a huge garden of thousands of Pink Lady Slippers. The hike itself begins on an old logging road. Trillium, Showy Orcus, Wild Geranium, Wild Iris and Dutchman's Pipe are just a few of the spring beauties to be seen. For the return, we'll switch to the Duncan Ridge Trail where there are Flame Azaleas as well as some super-sized Pink Lady Slippers. Note: this will be the first hike after the 2021 controlled burn. Hike Leaders Joy and Frank Forehand. For more information contact hikeleaderJF@bmtamail.org.



Save the Dates!
November 3 - 6, 2022
BMTA Hike Fest and Annual Meeting
Fontana Village, North Carolina
For reservations call (828) 498-2211.
To receive your discount -
Mention the Benton MacKaye Trail Association!

Deadline for the March Newsletter is Wednesday, March 2. Thank you!