



<http://www.bmta.org/>

## Points of Interest

Click the title to go directly to the page.

### Blessings

### Annual Meeting

### Annual Meeting Menu

### Worth the Trek

### Nominees

### Proud August Day

### Friday Night Social

### Safety First

### Lost and Found

### Things We Should Carry

### Crosscut Certification

### Sign Mystery

### River Rd/Cherohala Closures

### Upcoming

### Lakeview Drive Closure

## 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**



# Benton MacKaye Trail Association

VOLUME 40, ISSUE 9

SEPTEMBER 2023

## Blessings From the Trail

by Barry Allen

*'Holy cow, what the heck was that...'*

As my heart settled back into my chest, I quickly figured out what I had just seen. It was really nothing too extraordinary - except it had never happened to me. After all, pileated woodpeckers are an everyday sight across forests and backyards in much of the south. But I had never, ever, experienced one of these huge birds taking flight with a clatter and a whoosh from almost directly under my feet. As I collected my thoughts, I looked down to my right and spied a log just off the trail. The bark-less trunk was flat on the ground with huge wounds open along its length and wood chips lying in all directions. This was obviously the 'bait' to which the woodpecker had been attracted; my solitary trek had simply startled him off his lunch spot.

In my years of hiking, I have seen many memorable things along the trail. We all have. The open vistas, waterfalls and distant fields of green are both beautiful and welcome sights. Memories of days in the woods with friends and loved ones will always be treasured. *But my most vivid experiences along the trail have almost always been while alone. This is a bitter-sweet fact of hiking: you will always see more if you are alone and hiking quietly. But you have no one to share the joy of the experience. Accept these moments as blessings from the trail.*

My 'incident' with the pileated woodpecker took place along the Fork Ridge Trail portion of the BMT in the Big Frog Wilderness while scouting for a work trip. On the same day, barely half a mile further along the trail, my senses were once again brought back from wherever thoughts had taken them. This time, I heard the crashing of a large body moving very quickly through the forest. It was not hard to find the source of the noise - a huge black bear running in a gallop downhill...and away from me. To this day, I still can't quite comprehend the speed of that black bear. He was moving downhill and across a slope, but to see something that large moving that fast was mind-boggling. I had managed to get within 30 yards of this large animal - and neither of us had seen the other!

One of my favorite sections of trail is along the South Fork of the Jacks River. This lovely section of trail was adored by my dog Zep. The river was a great spot to cool off, so normally Zep would be off leash, dashing in and out of the river, checking everything with a freedom he couldn't enjoy at local parks. One day, as I finished eating lunch along the South Fork, with Zep enjoying a nap right next to me, I happened to look downstream as a small black bear crossed the river.

As the first bear exited, another bear entered the river following in the footsteps of the first. Right behind the second bear, mama bear casually strolled following the first two. Zep never moved, enjoying the sun and the nap too much. The bears were completely oblivious as they headed up the BMT toward the Pinhoti split. A perfect end to a summer lunch.

There is something about seeing bears act as bears are supposed to act. Near Hudson Gap one warm September day, I heard a commotion well below me and off the trail. Looking downhill, I saw a large bear digging intently into the ground. I was close enough to see a cloud of yellowjackets swarming as he collected a meal from their underground hive. As I stood there staring, he reared up on his hind legs, took a look around and sprinted down the hillside. I don't know if he saw me, smelled me, or just sensed me, but he sure took off, leaving a cloud of yellowjackets hovering above what had once been a nest.

Zep was a special dog with senses I never failed to heed. I looked forward to taking him on hikes, observing as he tensed and pointed his nose in the direction of sight, smell or sound. Generally, I could tell if the animal in question was a squirrel, a deer, or some type of fowl just by the way he acted. I have vivid memories of one particular late winter hike up Wallalah with Zep and Belle, another of my dogs. Belle was a hound mix, completely dominated by her nose. For that reason, she was always on a leash in the woods, as was Zep when the two hiked together. On this late winter day, the hike up Wallalah started on wet ground. As we moved farther up the mountain, the wet changed to snow until the snow was three or four inches deep. When Zep and Belle suddenly locked up, it was a warning that did not match other warnings - the hair on the backs of their necks stood straight up. I followed their stare to see a coyote watching us from a bit deeper in the woods and up the trail. That darn coyote ran up the trail toward the vista, stopped, turned around and stared at us - as if to say 'Come on, the view is just fantastic. Follow me.' He did this twice more before disappearing into the woods. Both dogs dragged me through the snowy, slushy, dangerous trail for what seemed forever toward the coyote and the vista. Our speed was governed only by how much I could slow two dogs through the slippery uphill slope and still remain on my feet!

I NEVER see coyotes along the trail, but on that particular day, I did. It would be my last day on the trail with Zep; he passed away not long after with a particularly aggressive mast cell cancer. Belle passed away this year, a dog that had seen me finish my 40's, make it all the way through my 50's and into my 60's. When she passed away, I decided to take Zep and Belle on one last hike into Section 3.



**Barry Allen with his current hiking buddy, Zeke.**

I followed our old path up Wallalah. Darned if I didn't see another coyote!

And not just one coyote, but three!

As I scattered their ashes at a favorite spot, more than a few tears were shed while years of memories passed through my mind.

But a remarkable thing happened on the hike back to my truck: a fleeting smile pushed back the tears as I remembered a long-ago game of 'follow me', a drag through the snow and blessings from the trail.



## Annual Meeting News

### 2023 BMTA Annual Meeting & Hike Fest

Mountain View Cabins, Tellico Plains, Tennessee

November 2 – 5, 2023

#### Annual Meeting & Hike Fest Webpage

For all the latest information on the 2023 Annual Meeting and Hike Fest (AMHF), go to [AMHF](#).

#### New for this year — Registration

To help us organize and plan for this year's events and activities, please Register [HERE](#) for the Annual Meeting and Hike Fest.

#### Accommodations—Book Now!

Room are going fast — Just 2 Queen Rooms left in the Retreat Cabin. Contact Clare Sullivan, [annualmeeting@bmtamail.org](mailto:annualmeeting@bmtamail.org).

Go to [ACCOMMODATIONS](#) to see other lodging choices.

#### Annual Meeting Banquet RSVP

RSVP online now for the Annual Meeting Banquet— [DINNER](#).

---

## Hike the BMT in Tennessee!

---





## 2023 Annual Meeting & Hike Fest Banquet

\*Tellico Plains High School Alumni Center

November 4, 2023

### BMTA Annual Meeting Banquet Menu

#### Buffet

*Pecan, Apples, Feta Salad with Apple Cider Vinaigrette*

*Tomato Pie*

*Grilled Fish*

*Grilled Chicken*

*Roasted Potatoes*

#### Dessert

*Tennessee Cheesecake*

#### Beverages

*Coffee, Iced Tea (Sweet & Unsweet) or Cold Soda*

---

---

**Go to [RSVP](#) to pay for the Banquet**

---

---

You also can pay by check. Checks should be made payable to the

Benton MacKaye Trail Association and mailed to:

Benton MacKaye Trail Association

PO Box 6

Cherry Log, GA 30522

**Deadline for Dinner Reservations is [October 20, 2023!](#)**

*Casual Attire*

*\*Alcohol is not allowed in the Tellico Plains High School Alumni Center.*

*The Presentation of the Awards and Raffle will follow at the Retreat Cabin.*

*Complimentary snacks/BYOB.*

---

---

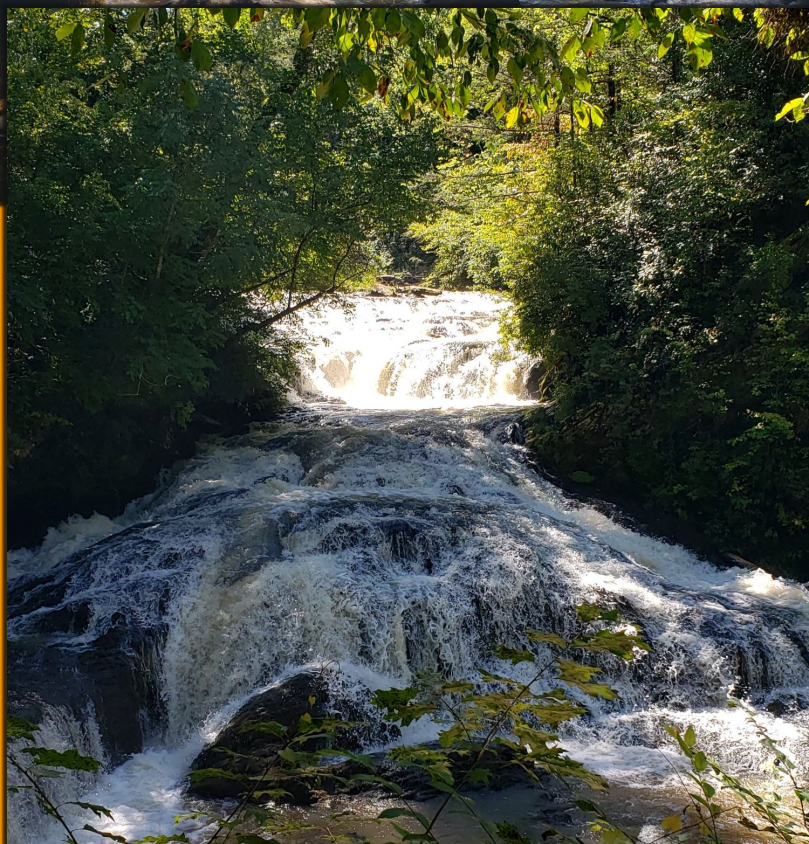
**Be sure to register for the Meeting by going to [Registration](#).**

---

---

# Turtletown Falls - Always Worth the Trek!

Photos courtesy of Ray Laws



# Nominees for 2023-2024 Board of Directors

by Darcy Douglas



## Nominating Committee's Slate of Nominees for BMTA's 2024 Board

*Nominating Committee:*

*Darcy Douglas, Chair, David Blount, Nelson Ashbrook, David Watkins and  
ex officio member, Ken Cissna*

	2024 Board Candidates	
Position	Current	Nominee
President	Ken Cissna	Bob Cowdrick
Vice President	Clare Sullivan	Clare Sullivan
Secretary	Judy Price	Jesse Hayden
Treasurer	Lydia Burns, CPA	Lydia Burns, CPA
GA Maintenance	Bob Cowdrick	Joe Cantwell
TN/NC Maintenance	Nelson Ashbrook	Nelson Ashbrook
Smokies Coordinator	David Watkins	David Watkins
Membership	Frank Forehand	Frank Forehand
Communications	Joy Forehand	Joy Forehand
Conservation	Patrick Ward	Patrick Ward
Hiking	Kelly Motter	Kelly Motter
State Rep – GA	Darcy Douglas	Presidential Pick
State Rep – TN/NC	Steve Barnes	Presidential Pick
Immediate Past President	Barry Allen	Ken Cissna

This year's Nominating Committee, chaired by Darcy Douglas, compiled this slate of officers for your consideration. Per our Bylaws, elections will be held at the 2023 Annual Meeting, set for the Alumni Center, in Tellico Plains, TN, on November 4, 2023.

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!

## BMTA's Proud August Day

by Bob Cowdrick with photos courtesy of Daphne Martin

Saturday, August 12, was a very proud day for many reasons and all 26 attendees shared reasons why they were personally proud. These included: Being an American, creating a BMT video, hiking the El Camino, grandchildren, BMTA maintenance trips, Wilderness First Aid certification, God's guidance, a thriving garden, family, trail races and more.

We all agreed that the installation of the Rhodes Mountain sign and the official completion of the re-route was a proud accomplishment for us all.

George Owen, with the help of Ken Andrews, Sky George, Ian Guttridge, Will Kirchoffer and Andy Meeks successfully transported and installed the Rhodes sign. His crew is very happy and maybe excited to not have to work on Rhodes in the near future.

On our last maintenance trip Whitney June mentioned that there was a sign missing at Wallalah Mountain. So, Bob Nelson made a new sign and Whitney led the team of Steve Dennison, Steve Hayden, Laurie Schatz, Erick Medina, Bob Nelson and Bob Cowdrick up Wallalah Mountain. It is not an easy feat to haul a large sign on a post two miles with 1100 feet of elevation gain! Well done!



All smiles! Steve Dennison and Bob Nelson in back. In the front Laurie Schatz and Whitney June with Steve Hayden getting the photo.

David Blount, Ken Cissna and Patrick Ward followed closely behind Whitney's crew, brushing the overgrown sections and carefully trying to avoid the dreaded poison ivy. Add two trees that were removed, and they were very busy.

Carol Nufer convinced Daphne, Madison and Kenny Martin to join her on her Section 4a. Brian Trinkle fortunately brought his chainsaw along. It was put to use on a large tree one mile in. It's never easy!

With the report of one large tree north of Wilscot Gap, Barry Allen solicited the help of Bill Cox, Rob Herman, Art Kolberg and Gilbert Treadwell to cut that one tree that turned into five trees. They multiplied. Nice work crew!







Laurie Schatz seems happy to be in the woods!



Brian Trinkle, Kenny and Daphne Martin and Carol Nufer.

We were grateful to have Erick Medina join us on his first BMTA work trip. He and the silky saw are working well together.

Let the numbers speak for themselves:

- ◆ 192 Volunteer hours
- ◆ 5200 feet of trail brushed
- ◆ 26 Members
- ◆ 7 Blowdowns removed
- ◆ 5 Proud crews
- ◆ 2 Signs installed

One of the crew members said they were proud of “BMTA Trail Work” during our safety briefing and I would agree. I am so very fortunate to have BMTA members dedicate their time and efforts which made this maintenance trip another successful day.

With Gratitude,  
Bob



Madison Martin takes it all in.



## Friday Nite Social

\*Tellico Plains High School Alumni Center  
November 4, 2023

### Complimentary Build Your Own Taco/Nachos Bar

*\*Alumni Center at Tellico Plains High School*

November 3, 2023

- Ground beef/Shredded Chicken
- Mexican Rice
- Refried Beans
- Lettuce
- Shredded cheese
- Crunchy/Soft taco shells
- Chips, Salsa, Queso and Sour Cream
- Fresh Tomatoes

Water, Sweet and Unsweetened Tea and a Variety of Soft Drinks

*A social hour (complimentary snacks/BYOB) will be held at the Retreat Cabin following Friday evening's Mexican meal. Raffle items will be available for viewing. Tickets will be sold as well.*

*\*Alcohol is not allowed in the Tellico Plains High School Alumni Center.*

Be sure to register for the Meeting by going to [Registration](#).



## Safety First

by Kelly Motter and Darcy Douglas

At the August 19, 2023, BMTA Board Meeting, it was the consensus of the Board that a safety committee should be created and appointed by the president.

With safety in mind, Kelly Motter and Darcy Douglas took a look back at some of the safety articles that previously appeared in BMTA's Newsletters. Ted Reissing began the series and Editor Glenn Loudermilk took it to a different level with 'Cousin Tim'. Another safety-oriented column was 'Boxie's Corner'. Many of the articles are relevant today – being safe ensures a good time and great memories!

### IT'S YELLOW JACKET SEASON

“This is the season when yellow jackets give us the most problem. They are hardest on Bulldogs (heh!), but do tend to bother hikers and workers from time to time. They are attracted to scents (perfumes, deodorants, your lunch, etc.), moisture (your water bottle and perspiration) and bright clothing. They generally nest in the ground in holes, old tree stumps, old tree stump holes and so forth. So, look before you sit! Look before you stand, too! They anger easily, will fly up trouser legs or into sleeves and invite friends to their funerals. They are good to avoid! I know of no foolproof repellent. If you do, send to us via email. The best thing is to avoid their nests – get out of areas where more than one is spotted. The cold will kill them, so after a good cold snap, they probably will not bother you. Meanwhile, beware, and give them a wide berth!”

– *BMTA September 1991 Newsletter*

Interesting that not much has changed in over 30 years in this regard!



### Clean Trail Days & September 30, 2023

#### *Fall Branch Falls Trailhead & the Swinging Bridge Parking Area* Clean Trails Day

Event staff will acquaint our guests with hiking and maintenance opportunities with BMTA as well as the importance of using Leave No Trace (LNT) principles when hiking or camping.




---

**Stop by to say “Hi!” while you enjoy a late summer hike!**

---

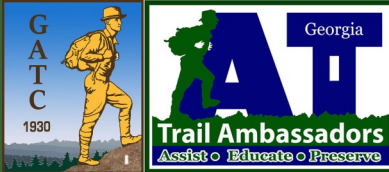
## Lost and Found



These were found by David Blount on a maintenance trip.

If these belong to you, please contact Bob Cowdrick to arrange a safe return to the owner.

Contact Bob Cowdrick at [gamaintdirector@bmtamail.org](mailto:gamaintdirector@bmtamail.org).



## Trail Skills Workshop Save the Date!



Make plans to attend the seventh annual Trail Skills Workshop (TSW) at Lake Winfield Scott (near Suches GA), September 23 – 24, 2023. This is a training event focused on teaching the most current trail construction and maintenance methods applicable for Eastern landscapes.

As a special bonus, on Saturday, September 23, Morgan Sommerville will be leading an Advanced Trail Maintenance class for experienced maintainers. This is an occasion for members to work with one of the leading authorities of trail design and construction to refine their techniques.

The Trail Skills Workshop is an excellent opportunity for participants to learn and perfect trail skills. Skilled instructors are provided from the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club (GATC), the United States Forest Service (FS) and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC). The \$30.00 fee (\$25.00 for GATC members) includes: all courses, a T-shirt, two nights camping and Saturday cookout and entertainment.

The \$25.00 (\$30.00 for non-members) covers the program, camping, dinner Saturday night and a T-shirt. For questions etc. contact [tsw@georgia-atclub.org](mailto:tsw@georgia-atclub.org).

Submitted by Jay M Dement, [jay@jayDphotos.com](mailto:jay@jayDphotos.com), 404-731-1901

## Things We Should Carry - Earplugs

by Bob Cowdrick

You will never find me on a BMT maintenance trip without a pair of earplugs in my pack. You never know when you will become a chainsawyer swamper or will be running a brushcutter and find the need to save your hearing by reducing the impact of the loud noise.

Here are a few factors BMTA members should consider when choosing earplugs:

- ◆ **Noise Reduction Rating (NRR):** The NRR indicates the amount of noise reduction provided by the earplugs in decibels (dB). Choose earplugs with a suitable NRR based on the noise levels present in the trail work environment. The higher the NRR, the better the protection against loud noises.
- ◆ **Comfort:** As a trail worker you may need to wear earplugs for extended periods, so comfort is essential. Look for earplugs made from soft, hypoallergenic materials that won't cause discomfort or irritation.
- ◆ **Disposable versus reusable:** Disposable foam earplugs are cost-effective and convenient, but reusable silicone or rubber earplugs might be more durable and offer a better fit for some individuals.
- ◆ **Fit:** Proper fit is crucial for effective noise reduction. Earplugs should seal the ear canal completely to block out noise. Some earplugs come with multiple sizes or are designed to mold to the shape of the ear for a customized fit.
- ◆ **Communication:** If you need to communicate with other workers while wearing earplugs, consider using high-fidelity earplugs that attenuate noise while still allowing speech and other important sounds to be heard clearly.
- ◆ **Durability:** Trail maintenance can be rough, so choose earplugs that are rugged and can withstand outdoor conditions.
- ◆ **Hygiene:** If reusable earplugs are chosen, ensure they are easy to clean and maintain.

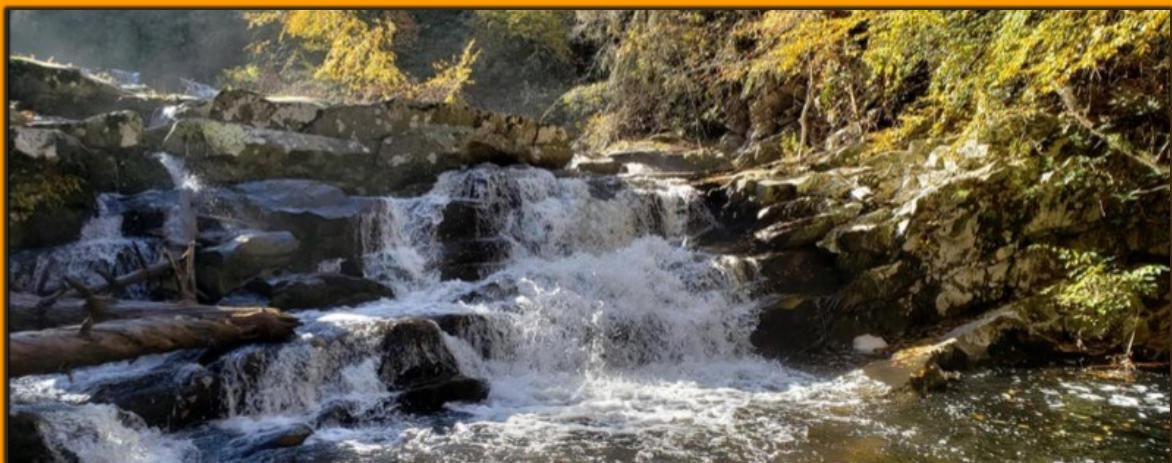


Continued next page



Before making a decision, it's a good idea to get recommendations from other BMTA maintainers on what has worked best for them. Different individuals may have different preferences and comfort levels with various types of earplugs.

Earmuffs might be a more suitable option for noise protection, especially for those who are using chainsaws or who are accompanying sawyers using chainsaws. They can offer higher noise reduction levels and can be easily worn with other protective gear. Always prioritize your safety and well-being. Bring a form of ear protection on every BMTA maintenance trip.



Please go to [Sign Up](#) to register for the  
2023 Annual Meeting and Hike Fest!



## Upcoming Crosscut Certification!

The Blue Ridge Ranger District is hosting a Crosscut A/B/C course November 13-17.

The link to register is:

<https://wildernessskillsinstitute.org/sawsi/2023-georgia-crosscut-saw-certification-course/>.

Complete details are in the link. First come first serve so check it out and sign up early if you're interested!

## It's Hot Out There!



**Why Extreme Heat is Nature's Stealthiest Killer**  
Out Alive from BACKPACKER

When we anticipate encountering bears, we come equipped with bear spray and the knowledge of how to act. In avalanche terrain, we know to pack our beacon, shovel, and probe. Yet we tend to overestimate the danger of a bear attack. But when it comes to the most deadly natural hazard, heat, our readiness often wavers. Why do we consistently underestimate such a palpable threat, and what are the cognitive mechanisms at play?

In this deep-dive episode, Dr. Peter Howe's groundbreaking research reveals a startling truth. Join us as we venture into one of the hottest places on earth, Death Valley National Park. Our special guests, a climate researcher and a seasoned representative from the park, offer life-saving advice on navigating and staying safe in extreme heat conditions. The temperatures are rising, and our awareness should be, too.

To listen to the podcast, go to <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/out-alive-from-backpacker/id1462484363>. Scroll down to August 16, 2023 - Why Extreme Heat is Nature's Stealthiest Killer. Select "Play".

Oh no! Mr. Bones did not pack enough hydration!!

## The Rhodes Mountain Sign Mystery

by George Owen

We were stumped! We hauled a heavy, eight-foot post with two signs attached indicating the directions of each trail for the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT) and the Duncan Ridge Trail (DRT) intersection almost to the top of Rhodes Mountain in Georgia. But the six of us could not make the sign work for the directions of the arrows pointing for the two trails. This is one of the two major intersections for the great Georgia Loop of over 50 miles for the Appalachian Trail, BMT and DRT. No matter how we set the post on the corner of the three-way intersection, the arrows did not point in the correct direction. This important sign was to replace the old one hauled up there years ago. That old sign is now well bear-clawed and weathered.

This began on the morning of the August 12 Georgia maintenance trip. The sign team assigned to lug the sign about 800 feet up the BMT over a mile from Skeenah Gap was composed of six trail workers - Ken Andrew, Sky George, Ian Guttridge, Will Kirchoffer and Andy Meeks. On the way to the intersection, these five were switching off carrying the cumbersome, heavy post with the two signs in two-man teams. This writer, George Owen, the ancient 85 years-old designated team leader, now avoided hauling that burden by going up to the vicinity of the post installation site earlier in the morning - age and sheer laziness has its advantages!



Would you like one of these bear ravaged signs? This sign and others will be in the Annual Meeting Raffle!

Continued next page

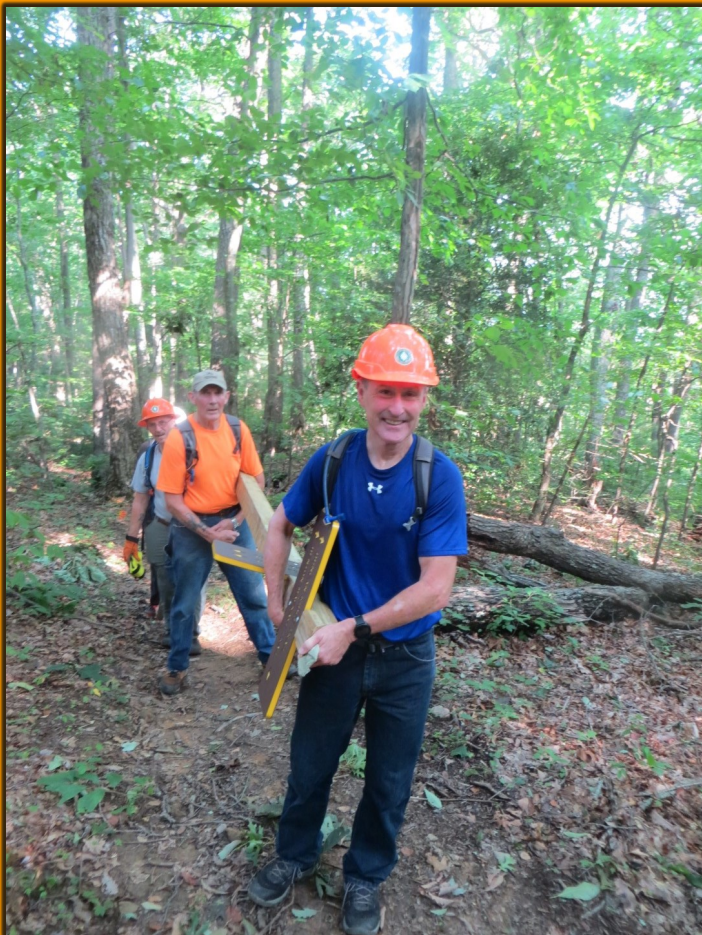


So, by mid-morning the new sign post arrived at the two trails' intersection just below Rhodes summit. A little rest for all haulers, then work began to take out the old signpost. Using a post-hole digger, we soon learned the old post was super-hard to remove. It had a removal-secure long bolt sticking out of the bottom in both directions. Defeating that extra security, we finally got the old post out of the hole, dug a little more and soon plopped the new one into the ground.

That is when, dear reader, we discovered that no matter which of the four directions we turned the post, we could NEVER make ALL the directional arrows on the two signs line up right! Some would, all NEVER!

Then we tried to place it on the other two of the three-corner trails intersection and that didn't work either. Regardless of whether all of us were a just too tired and a little confused or outright dumb, we couldn't figure a way to make the signs totally work. So, finally we just sat on the ground (some of us) and made all kinds of humorous or sarcastic remarks about the situation for a while. Defeat loomed!

**FINALLY A SOLUTION:** We put the post back in the old hole on the northeast side of the intersection and turned it so we would have to make the fewest corrections. Somebody in our group discovered he had a little roll of good, strong tape. We wrapped or stuck tape over two of the arrows pointing the wrong direction the machine-carved trail designations and made the two signs at least temporarily completely correct in the way the remaining sign arrows pointed.



Wait-I thought we were using poles?!



Hmm, well, we will just use old technology-tape!



**The “Strongmen of the BMTA”. Undeterred and undaunted!  
Ken Andrews, Sky George, Ian Guttridge, Will Kirchoffer, and Andy Meeks.**

No one even seriously considered the proposition of hauling the new sign post back down to Skeenah Gap and presenting it as a gift to GA Maintenance Director Bob Cowdrick. Instead, we cut off the two signs atop the now uprooted old post and hauled them out for a planned sentimental use Bob had plans for. Guess what?!

Then we started our trek downhill about a mile carrying just those two old signs between us. (The old post went into the woods to decay over time.) Most the group enjoyed a light lunch in the church parking lot shade located just below Skeenah Gap in the early afternoon.

**UPDATE** Bob Cowdrick emailed me that Signs Committee member Bob Nelson recently climbed Rhodes Mountain with tools in hand to correct the sign. From the pictures, this writer could not quite figure out what he did - but thanks for that. Oh, Bob Cowdrick also assured three of the team who put in the new sign that he would not put them on another team to climb up Rhodes this year. At least there is partial justice in the world - for some!



**Thank you, Bob Nelson! All fixed!**

## River Road / Cherohala Highway Closures

Recent severe flooding in the Tellico District caused road closures for River Road as well as the Cherohala Skyway.

According to the latest reports ... the Skyway into NC is open from TN mile 5 at Oosterneck Overlook to the end of the Skyway near Robbinsville, NC. River Road can be accessed by the Oosterneck Overlook. The only barricades are at mile 5 Oosterneck Overlook and about mile 2.5 where Old Furnace Rd meets the Skyway by the Tellico Beach Drive-In. Reports indicate that River Road is barricaded in the vicinity of Green Cove.

An alternate way to get around the washout is Rafter Road --> Shaw Mountain Road, which comes out onto the Skyway at TN mile 9.5, but due to the narrowness of this very twisty road it is not recommended except for local traffic.

Another way around south of the Skyway to access both River Road and the Skyway involves several different roads and is too complicated to even describe. It requires many miles of driving on gravel Forest Service roads.

In summary, don't try to use Tellico River Road until the washout on the Skyway is fixed, hopefully in another three weeks or so.

The detour TDEC recommends is extremely long. It involves driving on the dangerous section of US 129 known as the Tail of the Dragon. It is posted below, but not recommended.



The detour from Old Furnace Road to River Road, TDOT says, requires drivers to take:

- ◆ SR-165 West and turn right onto SR-68 North
- ◆ Follow SR-68 North for 12 miles
- ◆ Turn right onto US-411 North and follow that road for 12 miles.
- ◆ Turn right onto SR-72 and follow it for 10 miles.
- ◆ Turn right onto US-129 South, following the road for 38 miles, which includes 17 miles in North Carolina.
- ◆ Turn Right **onto** NC-143 West and follow it for 28 miles
- ◆ To reach Old Furnace Road from River Road, the steps given by TDOT are the exact opposite, starting on SR-165 East to North Carolina-143 East, then turning left onto US-129 North.

For more information about temporary road and trail closures go to [TDOT](#) or the [Tellico Ranger District](#).

# Upcoming Hikes and Maintenance Trips

by Kelly Motter, Hiking Director

## 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.

### September



**September 9 (Saturday)** GA Maintenance Trip. Sections 8 and 9 –Bushy Head Gap >> Watson Gap  
Contact Bob Cowdrick at [gamaintdirector@bmtamail.org](mailto:gamaintdirector@bmtamail.org).

**September 10 (Sunday)** BMT-Mud Gap to Whigg Meadow. Approximately an easy 3 miles round trip. Once we arrive at Whigg Meadow we will be able to view (and maybe help!) in the yearly bird banding. Contact Hike Leader Kelly Motter at [hikeleaderKM@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderKM@bmtamail.org)

**September 12 (Tuesday)** Hike to "The Narrows of the Hiwassee River" on a remote section of the BMT. See the flower, Ruth's Golden Aster, a tiny cave, magnificent river potholes and other unusual rock formations. Moderate 5 miles. Contact Hike Leaders Clare and Ed Sullivan at [hikeleaderCS2@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderCS2@bmtamail.org).

**September 15 (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. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org).

**September 22 (Friday)** Wildcat Creek hike: Monument Road to Fall Creek Falls, Buice Falls, stream crossing, Rocky Ford Cascades, to campground. Requires a shuttle. Moderate 7 or 8 miles. Contact Hike Leader Steve Dennison at [hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org)



**September 23 (Saturday)** TN/NC Maintenance Trip. Sections 18a - Beech Gap » Haoe Lead intersection.  
Contact Nelson Ashbrook at [tn-ncmaintdirector@bmtamail.org](mailto:tn-ncmaintdirector@bmtamail.org).

**September 29 (Friday)** BMT: From Highway 60 to the Swinging Bridge and back. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog) Moderate 7.4 miles. Lunch by Toccoa River and BMT's iconic Suspension Bridge. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org).



**September 30 (Saturday)** Clean Trails Day  
Contact Bob Cowdrick at [gamaintdirector@bmtamail.org](mailto:gamaintdirector@bmtamail.org).

## October

**October 6** (Friday) Shady Falls Trailhead to Lake Blue Ridge and back. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog)

Moderate 7 miles. Views of Lake Blue Ridge including very close up during mid-hike lunch.

Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org).



**October 14** (Saturday) GA Maintenance Trip. TBA

Contact Bob Cowdrick at [gamaintdirector@bmtamail.org](mailto:gamaintdirector@bmtamail.org).

**October 16** (Monday) Hike to Buck Bald and return. Approximately 4 miles.

Contact Hike Leader Steve Dennison at [hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org).

**October 20** (Friday) BMT Highway 515 to Weaver Creek and return. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog) Easy 5 miles. Mostly along dirt roads. One “rock hopping” stream crossing could get your feet wet depending on stream levels and recent rainfall.

Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org).



**October 28** (Saturday) TN/NC Maintenance Trip. TBA

Contact Nelson Ashbrook at [tn-ncmaintdirector@bmtamail.org](mailto:tn-ncmaintdirector@bmtamail.org).

## November

**November 10** (Friday) BMT: Three Forks to Hickory Flat on the AT, along FS road to No Name Bald and back on BMT. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog).

Moderate 7 miles. Hoping we'll get some nice fall colors. Plus Long Creek and Long Creek Falls.

Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org).



**November 11** (Saturday) GA Maintenance Trip. TBA

Contact Bob Cowdrick at [gamaintdirector@bmtamail.org](mailto:gamaintdirector@bmtamail.org).

**November 24** (Friday) Amadahy Trail. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog).

Five-mile easy to easy/moderate. Good hike for the day after Thanksgiving.

Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org).

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

## Great Smoky Mountains National Park Lakeview Drive will be closed from August 14 to November 14

Lakeview Drive will be closed from August 14 to November 14 for reconstruction. Hikers and visitors will not be able to access the Noland Creek Trail, Lakeshore Trail, Goldmine Loop Trail, Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT), or Lakeview Drive Tunnel from the road during the closure. \* During the road closure, backcountry campsites 65 and 67 also will be closed. All other backcountry campsites in the area will remain open but will only be reachable via routes and trailheads not accessed from Lakeview Drive. For specific information about backcountry access in the area, please contact the backcountry office at (865) 436-1297.

Consequently, BMT thru/section hikers will not be able to get into Bryson from the Tunnel on the Road to Nowhere for resupply. For reasonable resupply opportunities, hikers will have to hike from the Fontana Dam Visitor Center to Smokemont (about 60 miles) ... or go down Deep Creek into Bryson adding a lot of mileage.

Alternate Routing to Avoid Road Closure: NOBO-At Campsite 74, Lower Forney, leave the signed BMT and take Forney Creek Trail 2.4 miles to Springhouse Branch Trail, then take Springhouse Branch Trail 7.0 miles to Noland Creek Trail, Campsite 64 and continue on BMT. This adds 1.6 miles overall to the trip. SOBO-Just reverse.

For more information about temporary road and trail closures at Great Smoky Mountains National Park, please visit the [Park's Current Road, Facility, Trail & Backcountry Updates webpage](#).

*\*Cemeteries along Lakeview Drive will be open on Sunday, October 8 for anyone planning a Decoration Day or cemetery visit.*

[MEMBERSHIP](#)[DONATE](#)[DONATE](#)  
*Land Acquisition Fund*[STORE](#)

The deadline for the October Newsletter is Wednesday, September 27, 2023.  
Thank You!