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## BMTA Officers 2023-2024

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GA M/D:	Joe Cantwell
TN/NC M/D:	Nelson Ashbrook
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**BMTA Headquarters**



# Benton MacKaye Trail Association

VOLUME 41, ISSUE 4

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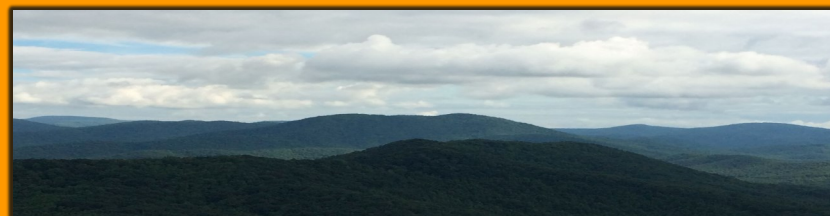
## Benton MacKaye Trail: An Appalachian Trail Alternative

by Bob Cowdrick

I was fortunate to attend the Appalachian Trail (AT) Gateway Festival this past month. Held at Amicalola Falls State Park, the festival was sponsored by the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club (GATC). The event featured outdoor/recreation focused speakers, vendors and associations. As your President, I participated on a panel discussion about alternatives to hiking the AT. I was joined with representatives from the Appalachian Long Distance Hiking Association and the Pinhoti and Bartram trail associations.

I believe hikers consider treks on the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT) for a number of reasons:

- ◆ **Less Crowded:** The AT attracts thousands of hikers each year, leading to crowded trails and shelters, especially during peak hiking seasons. The BMT, as a sister trail to the AT, tends to be less crowded, offering a more solitary and enjoyable experience for hikers who prefer solitude.
- ◆ **Scenic Beauty:** Both trails offer stunning natural beauty, but the BMT is known for its vistas, challenging mountain climbs, diverse ecosystems and scenic river valleys. Hikers on the BMT can enjoy panoramic views of the Appalachian Mountains, lush forests and sparkling streams.
- ◆ **Wilderness Experience:** While the Appalachian Trail passes through many towns and developed areas, the BMT traverses six wilderness areas with more remote and wild landscapes. Hikers on the BMT have the opportunity experience a true wilderness adventure.
- ◆ **Trail Maintenance:** While both trails are maintained by dedicated volunteer organizations, some hikers find some sections of the BMT are better maintained and less eroded. This can lead to a more enjoyable hiking experience with smoother trails and fewer obstacles.



The BMT is a fantastic alternative to the AT for hikers seeking solitude, natural beauty and a wilderness experience. The trail we support has something to offer for outdoor adventurers of all skill levels.

# Rock Creek Hike

by Emily McFee, Knoxville hiker, with photos courtesy of Clare Sullivan, Judy Price and Mary Alton

On our eight-mile hike with the Benton MacKaye Trail Association and Cherokee Hiking Club members, plus one guest, we went through Section 12a of the Benton MacKaye Trail and turned east on the Rock Creek Trail. During our hike, we saw plenty of frog eggs, a couple salamanders, tremendous views and some not quite ready to bloom mountain laurel. We hit slippery rocks on the creek crossings, a few blowdowns that were fun, but the trail was otherwise clear. Overall, it was a great hike with fantastic weather!



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## Remembering Larry Dumas

by Tom Keene

Frank Forehand tells me Larry Dumas joined the Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA) in 2004. My first memory of Larry was as a maintainer of Section 5c, from Brawley Mountain to Dial Road. I was maintenance director at the time, and it quickly became clear that Larry was a model section maintainer. Not only was he always on top of the actual maintenance, but he also very clearly loved HIS section simply as a slice of nature. He would talk with obvious delight about the great winter views of the river from the ridge just trail north of the Brawley Mountain fire tower, and the nice stand of white pines as you approached that ridge from Dial Road. He portrayed his maintenance visits mainly as a lucky chance to experience a beautiful place.

Through pure chance, I had the pleasure of pairing with Larry for car shuttles during several of the annual walk-thrus the BMTA used to do. The one-on-one rides on Forest Service roads gave me a chance to get to know Larry. In his quiet, unassuming way, the man could tell a story! Plus, his long career as a medical first-responder, and several decades leading backpacking trips for the Boy Scouts, gave him plenty of material for his tales!



Larry receiving the coveted Pulaski for Trail Worker of the Year in 2018.



Larry was into so many useful and interesting things!

Never needy himself, whether emotionally or otherwise, Larry took such joy in helping other people, or doing useful projects – like those beautiful kiosks that he turned out for the Benton MacKaye Trail. They surely took a lot of detailed planning and hard work. But the sweat and moments of frustration were trivial to Larry - he was just delighted to be able to do something useful for the trail.

Larry Dumas was a terrific member of the BMTA, and an even better human being.

We will miss you, Larry!

## Maintenance Trip

by Joe Cantwell

Due to heavy rain on March 9, the normal Georgia maintenance trip was rescheduled for March 16. The morning was cloudy and cool, just perfect for 21 maintainers to work on the trail.

Three crews concentrated on Section 3 from Hwy 60 to Skeenah Gap Road. The priority task of Crew #1, led by Bob Cowdrick, was to repair the tread on the Rhodes Mountain re-route. Andy Meeks, Michael Cowan, Michael Rosenburg, Dale Fiedler, Art Kolberg and Katie Fox, restored 1400 feet of tread to perfect condition. Carol Nufer, the Section Maintainer for Section 3b, along with Byron Coker and Marty Dominy worked on cleaning 48 water diversions.



Section 3b looking great!!!

Crew #2, led by Joe Cantwell drove on Wildcat Creek Road and then bushwacked a half mile to reach the trail south of Licklog Mountain. As Gilbert Treadwell, sawyer, and Mike Pilvinsky, swamper, tackled three blow-downs, Joe regraded 100 feet of tread in the same area. The crew proceeded south to meet up with Crew #3 at Wallalla Mountain.



Hmm. Well, do we drive under this or since we are sawyers perhaps we should just get to work!



The Martin Crew!

The Martins, Kenny, Daphne and Madison, along with Laurie Schatz walked 2.6 miles northbound from Hwy 60 at Little Skeenah Creek to a rootball which had left a large hole in the trail. After analyzing multiple repair options, they decided to cut a new tread above the rootball. Their plan worked to perfection, even including riprap on the newly built fill slope. The Martin Crew then cut three trees and repaired tread on their return to Hwy 60.

Steve Hayden, Section Maintainer on Section 5a and b, had requested help to safely remove five blowdowns on his section. Ian Guttridge and Ken Anderson joined Steve in accomplishing the work. Next month's trip will address drainage and tread repairs on this section.

After completing assigned tasks on Section 3, Marty Dominy scouted Section 4b, clearing multiple small blowdowns, cleaning 10 water diversions of leaves and preparing a detailed report for future maintenance trips.

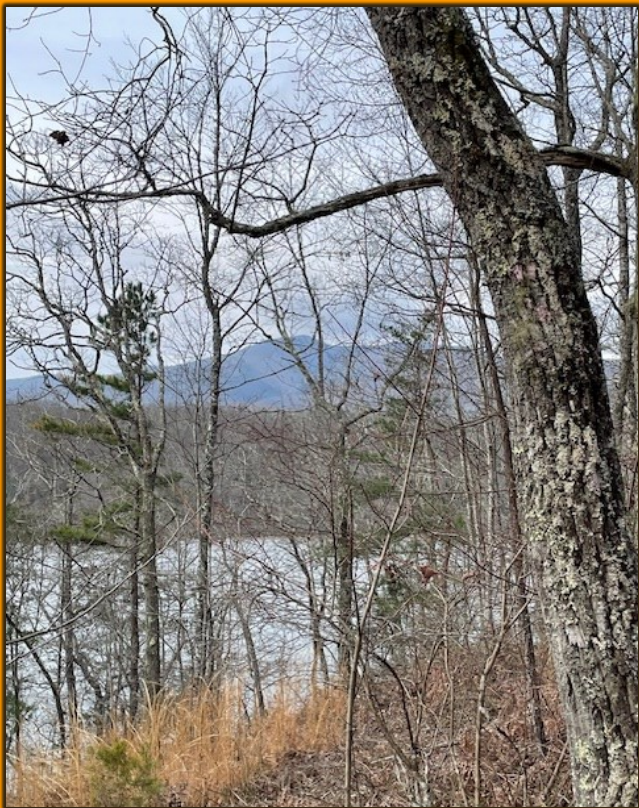
All participants are commended for volunteering 168 hours of maintenance on 11.8 miles of trail. As Georgia Maintenance Director, I thank you for safely improving these sections of the BMT for the benefit of all future hikers.

## **ALERT! NOROVIRUS on the AT**

The NPS Office of Public Health has received increasing reports of gastrointestinal (GI) illnesses among hikers and other individuals along the Appalachian Trail in areas of Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina. Norovirus is suspected as the cause of illness and has been confirmed diagnostically in at least some of the cases. The impact of norovirus in other areas and states along the Appalachian Trail is possible due to virus transmissibility and challenges to hand hygiene and sanitation along the trail. For more information:

[GA, NC, TN – Norovirus Alert UPDATED 3/27/24 | Appalachian Trail Conservancy](#)

# Brush Creek Loop Hike at Ocoee Lake



# Blood Mountain Getaway!

by Kathy Williams



The trail was rocky and the weather cold, but gorgeous!



Tiny Sasquatch helped Hike Leader Kelly Motter by looking for signs and blazes.



Getting up there! Kelly Motter, Bill Barber, Rosemary Barber and Donna Davis.



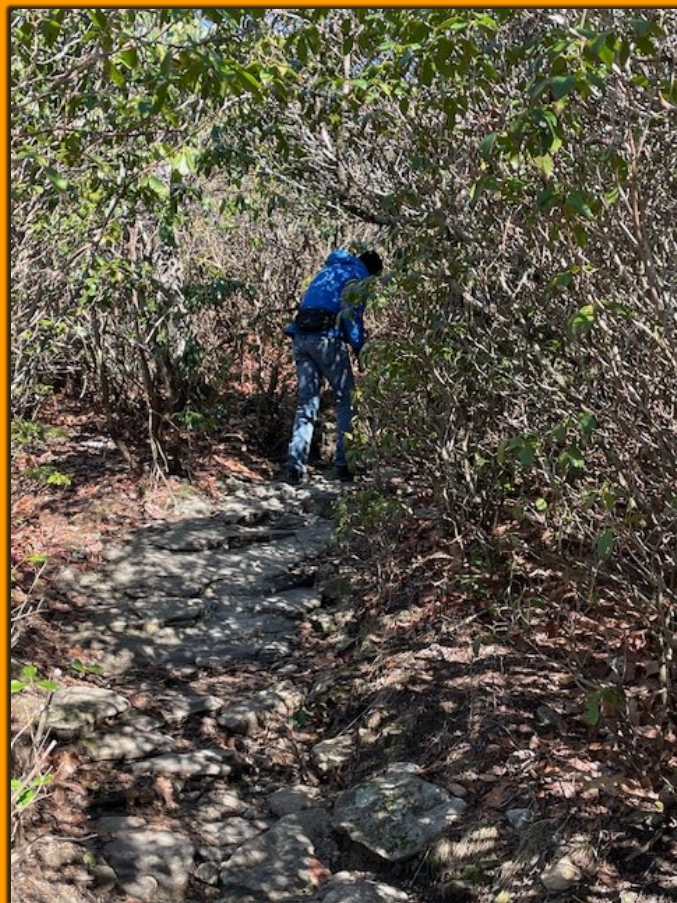
At the top, blazes on the rocks lead the way.

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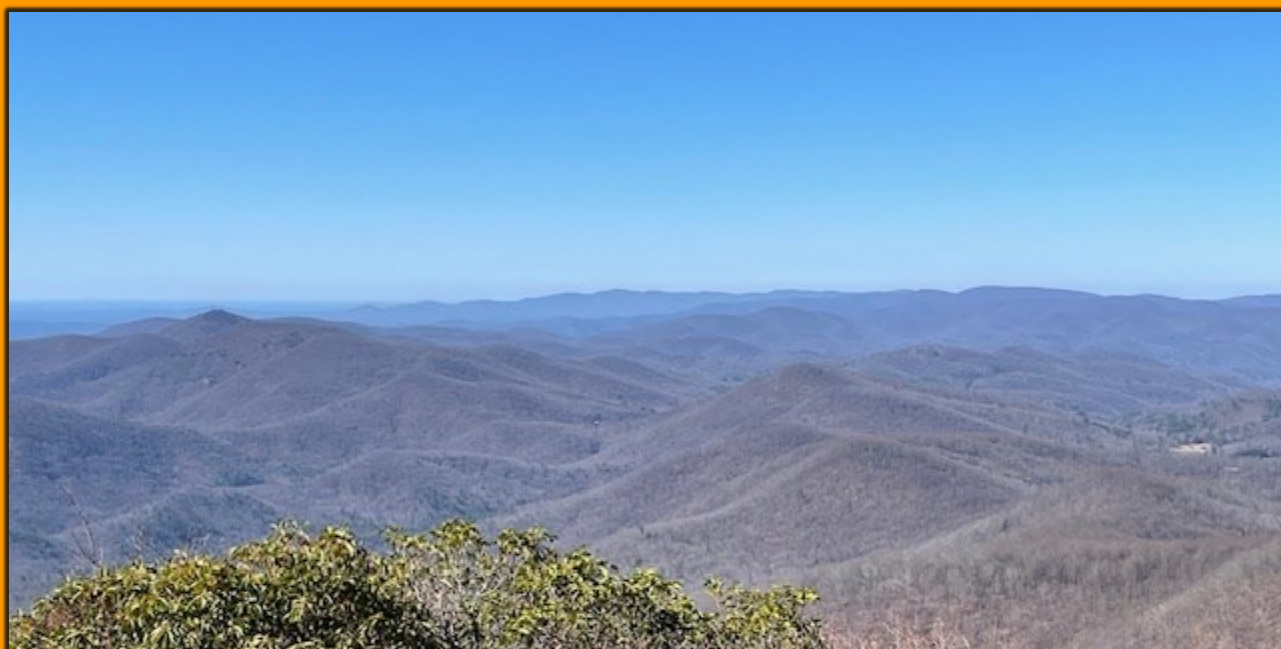




Tiny Sasquatch made friends with a thru hiker. She did not have a trail name, but Tiny called her “woman eating sausage on top of Blood Mountain.”



The top was thickly forested with rhododendrons.



Stunning!



The reward of a hard climb!



The shelter built by the Civilian Conservation Corps.



On the way down we removed some stuff that did not belong on the trail. 'Leave No Trace' please!

It was a great day and a fantastic experience thanks to our Hike Leader Kelly Motter!



## BMTA's 2024 Annual Meeting & Hike Fest

*Unicoi State Park & Lodge, Helen, Georgia*

**October 31 — November 3**

### Great Hikes!

- Smith Creek >> Anna Ruby Falls
- Hemlock Falls Trail
- Brasstown Bald >> Jack's Gap Overlook
- Weaver Creek >> Boardtown Road

### Non Hiking Activities

- Shop Helen, GA!
- Trout Fishing
- Sautee Nacoochee



**COME EARLY / STAY LATE**

**SPECIAL RATE APPLIES TO YOUR ENTIRE STAY!**

Lodge Rooms, Unique Cabins and Campsites

### Friday Nite Social

- Complimentary Hors d' Oeuvres,
- S'mores & Hot Chocolate
- Cash Bar



**BMTA's Annual Meeting  
Awards Banquet by the Fireplace**

**Featured Speaker**

**And More!**



**For reservations call 800-573-9659.**  
**To receive your discount—Use Code 10280**  
**Mention the Benton MacKaye Trail Association!**

## Making Their Lives Better

by Clare Sullivan with photos courtesy of Karen Kocher

On March 12, 2024, 25 hikers from the Benton MacKaye Trail Association and the Cherokee Hiking Club arrived at Project Chimps in Blue Ridge, GA, to enjoy a tour of the facilities as well as a hike on the Yellow Trail.

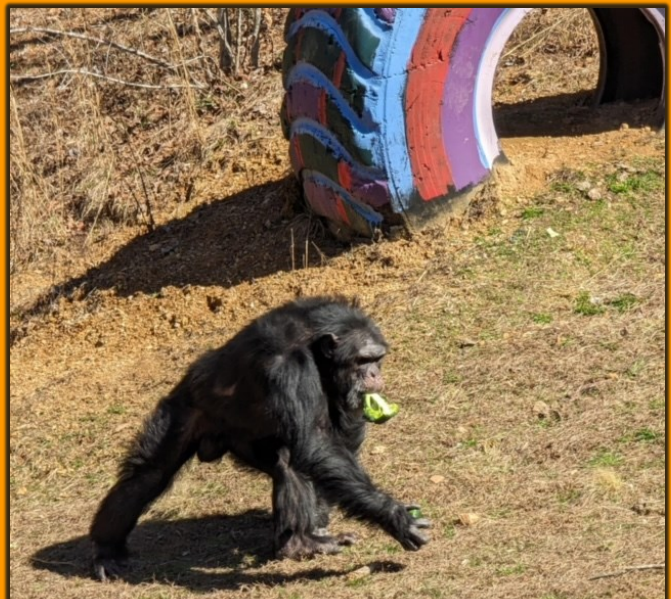
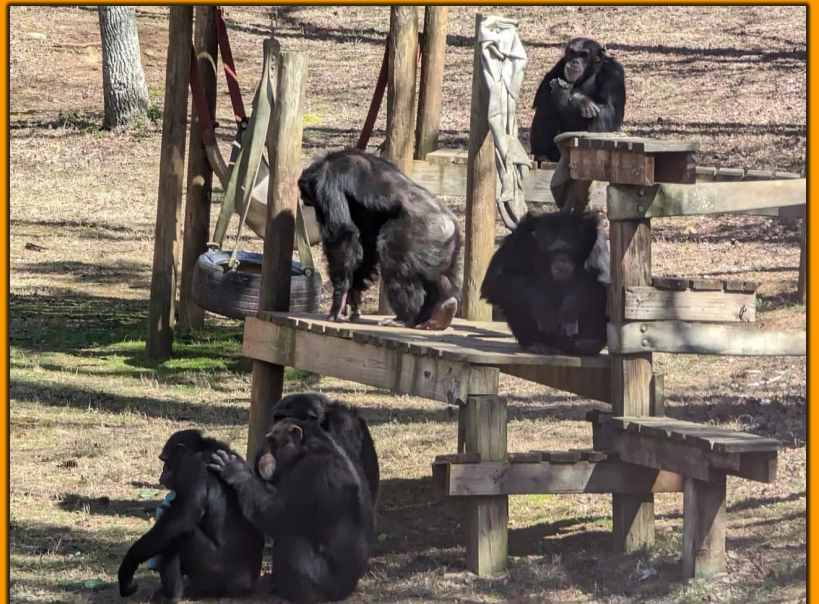
The staff and volunteers at Project Chimps definitely are making the lives of the 95 chimps much better than when the chimps were used for medical research.

Our day was both exciting and educational. Chimps, with an academic mind of an 11 - 12-year-old, the strength of seven or eight humans and the emotional development of a three or four-year-old child, life has its daily ups and downs. Consequently, staff, volunteers and visitors must be very cautious.

We walked by the six villas where the chimp families reside. We participated in a lunch launch for the Chateau B group in the habitat. The luncheon menu for the chimps included zucchini, cabbage and broccoli.



Continued next page





The Lunch Launch uses a slingshot apparatus shooting the food into the habitat encouraging the chimps to forage.



Next on our itinerary was a 2.5-mile trek on the lovely Yellow Trail. Hearing the hoots and pants of the chimps as we hiked made for a truly unique hike. At the top of Paris Mountain, we enjoyed the view from the Overlook.

The group contributed more than \$750 to help Project Chimps continue their work.

## Caney Creek - Hiking to the Past

by Clare Sullivan with photos courtesy of David LaBine and Clare Sullivan

BMTAers have made many treks to Caney Creek – an extinct village that was located on the Ocoee River in the Cherokee National Forest. Each year, hikers are filled with anticipation to see what new discoveries await them in the ruins of the once-thriving community.



Although the trail to the site was cleared in January, the trek included numerous challenges. Gusty winds had left an abundance of obstacles that impeded the hikers' progress.



The first evidence of the settlement we saw was the remains of indoor plumbing in Caney Creek a century ago.



One of our most interesting photos from this year was of the remains of one of the fishponds near the foundation of a supervisor's home. The fishpond had a beautiful rock covered with new foliage and was full of frog eggs.



The emerging spring flowers – dwarf irises, star chickweed and hepatica – added yet another attractive dimension to the hike.



The pole for the net on the tennis court was still in place as were many other structural remains. The court even had lights 100 years ago! Brushing aside some leaves we found evidence of the century-old sidewalk.



Was this part of a bathroom 100 years ago?



David LaBine and Doug Lynch examine artifacts along the foundation of a home at extinct Caney Creek.



The intrepid Caney Creek "Archeologists"!

Left to right front: David LaBine, Sharon Royal, Clare Sullivan, Back row: Irene Hall and Doug Lynch.



## Report What You See

by Joy Forehand

Spring is in the air – it's time to hit the trail!

The Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA) has an ongoing commitment to keep the trail safe and open for everyone to enjoy. Our section maintainers are out there year-round cleaning water diversions, repairing tread, clearing brush, cutting out blowdowns and more. The BMTA also has once/month work trips for those sections requiring the services of a crew to return the trail to tip-top shape. That is what BMTA trail workers do. But, the almost 300-mile-long Benton MacKaye Trail has 83 maintenance sections -- our trail workers can't be everywhere at once. Plus, a section can be checked as clear one day and the next day a tree falls across the trail on the same section. That's where YOU come in!

Hikers can be an invaluable resource to help us meet the challenge of keeping the trail open. Day hikers, backpackers and thru hikers are our "eyes on the trail" when maintainers cannot be there. If you see a tree down across the trail or a tree's rootball took out a portion of the trail, take a picture. Email the picture to BMTA ([reportwhatyousee@bmta.org](mailto:reportwhatyousee@bmta.org)) along with the GPS (or general location) and any details you think may be helpful. Please include a phone number so our maintenance directors can contact you for additional information if needed.



Before and after!

Trail issues are not limited to blowdowns/brush. Rocks can slide down onto the trail. Heavy rains may wash out a section. Feral hogs can annihilate the tread. On the other hand, a section clear report is equally important. Knowing a section is clear for hikers helps BMTA to focus our maintenance resources where they are needed most.

When you're out hiking, help us to help you have an enjoyable hike -- Remember to 'Report What You See'! And, if you're interested in learning more about trail maintenance, go to [Maintenance](#) ... or ... if you're interested in adopting a section go to [Sections Available](#). To see some of the latest trail reports go to [Reports](#).

*Help Us Help You to Have a Great Hike!*

## Which way to Key West?

by Tom Keene

We were headed back to our Cherry Log cabin late on a recent Sunday afternoon. As we headed down a grade, we saw a guy walking toward us who looked like he was geared up for a long hike.



We greeted when we met.

“You going far?” Jane asked.

“Hoping to get to the Pinhoti intersection tomorrow. Then, if things work out, to Key West.”

“Ooo!” I offered. “doing the big one!”

We asked his name. “Joe.” he said. “Trail name ‘Hot Sauce.’”

It turned out Joe came by his trail name honestly. He had an organic farm west of Philadelphia where he mainly grew peppers and made sauces he sold to Philly restaurants. Then, a developer bought the property and didn’t want to wait for Joe’s lease to expire to start developing. The result....Joe got a nice settlement.

“But I wish I had asked for more.” He chuckled. “The first number I said, he didn’t even think about it, just said ‘deal’ and stuck out his hand to shake on it. Anyway, it was enough to let me take a good chunk of time off to do some thru hiking.

Hot Sauce has been on the trail for almost a year, not hurrying. Taking side hikes when they looked interesting and taking breaks for family events like Christmas and his daughter’s graduation.

It being late afternoon, we asked if he was going to stop at the shelter on the Sisson property, which was just ahead.

“No” he said. “I saw that, but I’m aiming get that next road walk out of the way today and to camp when I get to Bushy Head Gap and back into the National Forest.”

“Well, good luck!”

Hot Sauce looked to the right, saw one of Darcy’s white diamonds,... and headed for Key West.



## Condolences



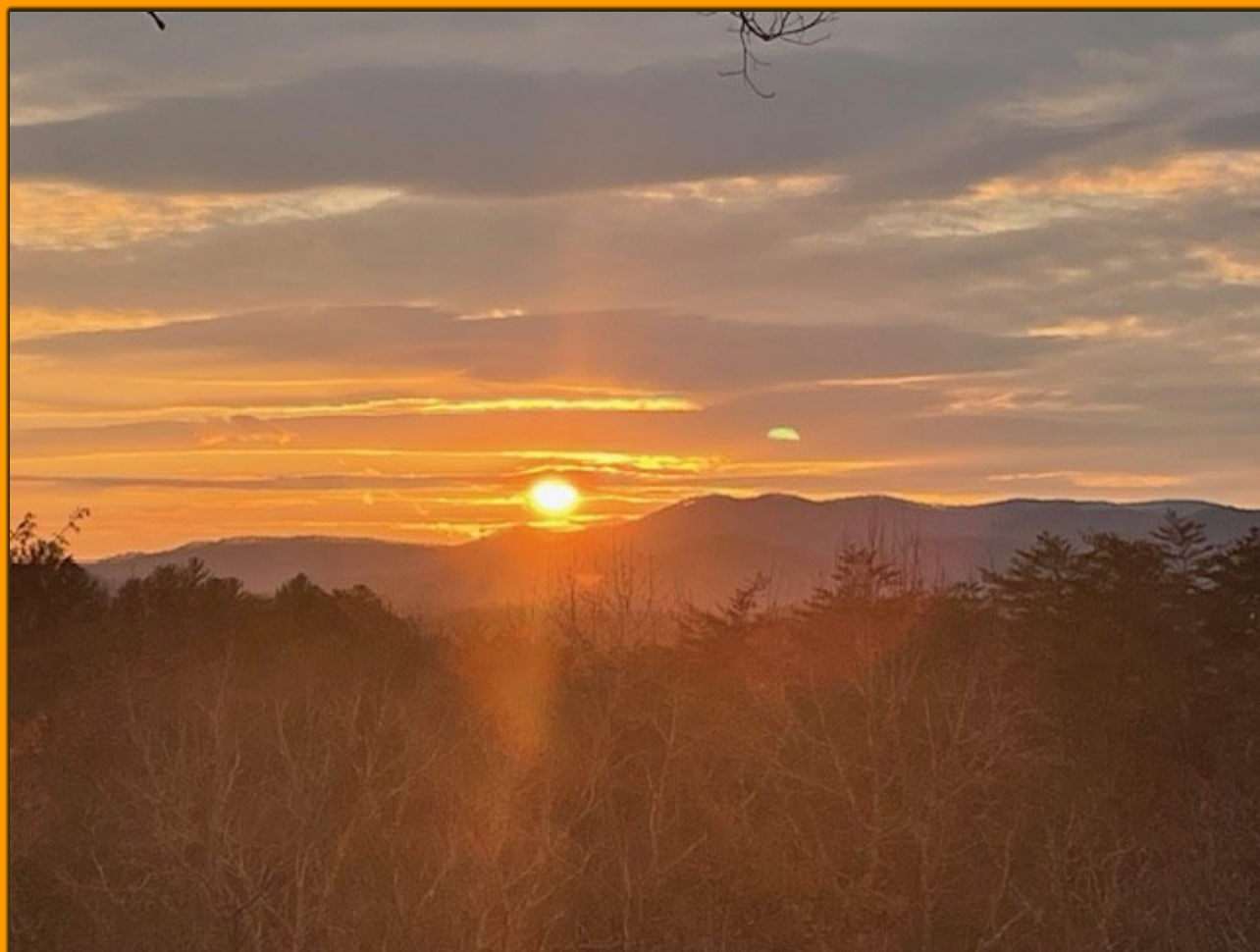
Condolences to the family of Elma Ettman who recently passed away.

A long-time member of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association, Elma was Secretary/Historian of the BMTA in 1997 and Secretary in 1998.

Elma was an active volunteer and supporter of the Blue Ridge Mountains Arts Association (BRMAA).

In keeping with Elma's wishes, a scholarship fund has been established in her memory and honor at BRMAA. All donations will go to advance the education of your people, ages 17 to 25, who are aspiring artists.

To donate go to <https://www.blueridgearts.net/donations--scholarships.html>.



# 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.

### April

**April 10** (Wednesday) Tobacco Pouch Trail to Buice Falls to Fall Creek Falls and return on Fall Creek Trail. Moderate/strenuous approximately 8 miles with views of the cascades. GA WMA license required. Contact Hike Leader Steve Dennison at [bmtahikeleadersd@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleadersd@bmta.org).

**April 12** (Friday) Flat Creek Loop. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Moderate 5.6-mile loop hike featuring Flat Creek. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [bmtahikeleaderkc@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleaderkc@bmta.org).

### April 13 (Saturday) BMTA Monthly Maintenance Trips.



#### GA Crew

Section 4 Skeenah Gap >> Wilscot Gap  
Section 5 Wilscot Gap >> Old Dial Road

#### TN Crew

Section 17d Mud Gap » Beech Gap, Nantahala NF

Contact Joe Cantwell at [bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org](mailto:bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org).

Contact Nelson Ashbrook at [bmtatn-ncmaintdirector@bmta.org](mailto:bmtatn-ncmaintdirector@bmta.org).

**April 14** (Sunday) BMT Hwy 60 to Suspension Bridge and return. Moderate/strenuous approximately 8 miles long with 1800 ft elevation gain. Contact Hike Leader Kelly Motter at [bmtahikeleaderkm@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleaderkm@bmta.org).

**April 15** (Monday) Flats Mountain Trail. Moderate 6.2 miles with shuttle. Flats Mountain overlooks the Indian Boundary Recreation Area. We will leave shuttle vehicles at the bottom at Beehouse Gap on Citico Creek Rd then drive to Eagle Gap at mile 18.4 on the Skyway. The trail is for the most part downhill, but we will start out with a climb on an old road to the top of Flats Mountain. There is also another climb about half-way through the hike. After the hike, we will retrieve our vehicles at Eagle Gap on the Skyway. The central part of the trail is often brushy with blackberry bushes so wear long pants. We will eat lunch about mile 3 on the hike in an unnamed gap. Contact Hike leaders Rick and Brenda Harris at [bmtahikeleaderrh@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleaderrh@bmta.org) or text 513-260-1184 if you plan to attend.

**April 16** (Tuesday) Trails of Jack Rabbit. TR 750, 756, 757 and 754. This creates a loop. The hike is moderate and approximately 5 miles. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at [bmtahikeleaderrc@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleaderrc@bmta.org).

**April 17** (Wednesday) Brasstown Bald in and out 4-mile moderate hike on the Wagon Train Trail. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at [bmtahikeleaderrc@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleaderrc@bmta.org).

**April 19** (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. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [bmtahikeleaderkc@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleaderkc@bmta.org).

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## May

**May 1** (Wednesday) Lady Slippers! Mulky Gap near 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 some super-sized pink lady slippers. Contact Hike Leaders Joy and Frank Forehand at [bmtahikelead-erjf@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikelead-erjf@bmta.org).

**May 3** (Friday) BMT: From Thunder Rock Campground, up Thunder Rock Express Trail, across Chestnut Mountain Trail and down the BMT. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Moderate 5.2-mile loop. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [bmtahikeleaderkc@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleaderkc@bmta.org).

**May 6** (Monday) Cartecay River Shoals. This is a very short and easy hike with spectacular river views. You will see where Clear Creek literally cut a channel through solid rock. You also will visit the confluence of Clear Creek and the Cartecay River. The hike is only about one and a half miles long, but well worth it. Afterward, we can go to lunch, or if you're interested, we can add four or more miles at the Cartecay Loop Trail. Contact Hike Leader Mike Pilvinsky at [bmtahikeleadermp@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleadermp@bmta.org).

**May 8** (Wednesday) Lady Slipper Hike. BMT at Weaver Creek in Blue Ridge. Moderate/strenuous 3.8 miles. This will be a SLOW, LEISURELY hike to enjoy the wildflowers. Initially we'll pass by beautiful mountain laurel groves peppered with flame azaleas. Stop for lunch at the water cutoff beside some of the largest lady slippers on the section. As we stroll back to the trailhead, we'll pass numerous gardens of the pink beauties. Contact Hike Leaders Joy and Frank Forehand at [bmtahikeleaderjf@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleaderjf@bmta.org).

**May 10** (Friday) Visit the refurbished shelter on the Sisson property. Hike on the BMT from the Craddock Center to the shelter and return. This is a relatively easy hike of about 4 miles or so. The shelter is at the half-way point so bring a snack. Along the way you'll also visit the only chapel on the BMT. Afterwards we might have lunch at the Pink Pig BBQ. Contact Hike Leader Mike Pilvinsky at [bmtahikeleadermp@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleadermp@bmta.org).



**May 11** (Saturday) BMTA Monthly Maintenance Trip. TBA  
Contact Joe Cantwell at [bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org](mailto:bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org).  
Contact Nelson Ashbrook at [bmtatn-ncmaintdirector@bmta.org](mailto:bmtatn-ncmaintdirector@bmta.org).

**May 11** (Saturday) Waucheesi Bald. Moderate 6.2 miles with shuttle. We will leave vehicles at the lower trailhead on Old Furnace Road, then drive to the top of Waucheesi Bald. High clearance 4WD vehicles recommended. This hike starts at the top of Waucheesi Bald by the site of the old fire tower (now communication towers) on a small bald with views into the surrounding mountains. We will hike steadily downhill for over 2300' with one short uphill until we reach Wildcat Creek. We will have to ford Wildcat Creek and possibly Tobe Creek (depending on water levels) so bring water shoes, extra socks and a small towel. From Wildcat Creek we have an uphill climb to Old Furnace Road. We will eat lunch at Tobe Creek. Contact Hike leaders Rick and Brenda Harris at [bmtahikeleaderrh@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleaderrh@bmta.org) or text 513-260-1184 if you plan to attend.

**May 17** (Friday) Amadahy Trail. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Easy/moderate 5 miles along the shore of Carter's Lake. Lunch at the marine campground. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [bmtahikeleaderkc@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleaderkc@bmta.org).

**May 21** (Tuesday) Turtletown Creek Falls Moderate 5 miles. Turtletown Creek plus two of the most beautiful falls you'll ever see on a short hike. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at [bmtahikeleaderrc@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleaderrc@bmta.org).

**May 29** (Wednesday) Pickens Nose overlook on the AT. Enjoy this beautiful view on a moderate, short trail (under 3 miles). Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at [bmtahikeleaderrc@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleaderrc@bmta.org).

**May 31** (Friday) Wilscot Gap to Brawley Tower, Payne Gap and return. Moderate/strenuous 12.6 miles. Option for a shorter version Wilscot Gap to Brawley Tower and return 6.2 miles round trip. Contact Hike Leader Steve Dennison at [bmtahikeleadersd@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleadersd@bmta.org).

**May 31** (Friday) Fightingtown Creek Nature Park. The Creekside Trail. Easy/moderate 3.5 miles. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [bmtahikeleaderkc@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleaderkc@bmta.org).

## June

**June 2** (Sunday) Lake Blue Ridge Hike. This 6-mile moderate hike takes in a few trails in the Aska area. Contact Hike Leader Kelly Motter at [bmtahikeleaderkm@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleaderkm@bmta.org).

**June 3** (Monday) Brush Creek Trail. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Easy/moderate 7 miles. Almost all gently downhill. Shuttle required. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [bmtahikeleaderkc@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleaderkc@bmta.org).

**June 4** (Tuesday) Piney Knob Trails Murphy, NC. Rhodo-coaster Trail. Moderate 5 miles. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at [bmtahikeleaderrc@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleaderrc@bmta.org).



**June 8** (Saturday) BMTA Monthly Maintenance Trip. TBA  
Contact Joe Cantwell at [bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org](mailto:bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org).  
Contact Nelson Ashbrook at [bmtatn-ncmaintdirector@bmta.org](mailto:bmtatn-ncmaintdirector@bmta.org).

**June 15** (Saturday) Watch the water arrive! Start at the Ocoee Whitewater Center and then hike the BMT from FS Rd 221 to Thunder Rock and perhaps see the rhododendrons in bloom. Easy 3.4 miles. Contact Hike Leader Clare Sullivan at [bmtahikeleadercs2@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleadercs2@bmta.org).

**June 16** (Sunday) Standing Indian on the AT. This 5-mile moderately paced hike leads us to a beautiful overlook on the AT at over 5000 ft. Contact Hike Leader Kelly Motter at [bmtahikeleaderkm@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleaderkm@bmta.org).

**June 21** (Friday) Turtletown Creek Falls. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Moderate 5 miles. Turtletown Creek plus two of the most beautiful falls you'll ever see on a short hike. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [bmtahikeleaderkc@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleaderkc@bmta.org).

**June 24** (Monday) Thunder Rock Campground Ocoee Whitewater Center. Rhododendron Trail to Chestnut Ridge Trail to Bear Paw Loop and return. Moderate 5 miles. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at [bmtahikeleaderrc@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleaderrc@bmta.org).

**June 24 (Monday)** Beech Gap to Bob Bald. Moderately/strenuous 7 miles round trip with 900' climb. We will park at the state line at Beech Gap on the Skyway. The first 2 miles are on an old FS road with only minimal climbing. When we reach the end of the road, we will head up the BMT to Bob Bald, a climb of 900' and quite steep in places. Once we reach the top, we will enjoy the views and eat lunch, then head back to Beech Gap on the Skyway. Contact Hike leaders Rick and Brenda Harris at [bmtahikeleaderrh@bmta.org](mailto:bmtahikeleaderrh@bmta.org) or text 513-260-1184 if you plan to attend.

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



## Wilderness Skills Institute

May 20-24 and May 28-31

*Transylvania County, NC on the Pisgah National Forest at the Cradle of Forestry*

This is one of the best training opportunities available. You can attend one or both weeks. Each class is multiple days, so you can only take one class per week.

- ◆ Crosscut Saw A/B
- ◆ Wilderness First Aid and CPR
- ◆ Wilderness Ranger and Trail Technician Workshop
- ◆ Advanced Trail Techniques: Stonework
- ◆ Introduction to Horse Packing
- ◆ Wilderness Management Fundamentals
- ◆ Trail Layout & Design
- ◆ Land Navigation and Orienteering
- ◆ Southern Appalachian Ecosystems

Apply online at <https://wildernessskillsinstitute.org/sawsi/wsi-application-hidden/>. This is open to all club members, and there is no cost to attend. Free camping is available on-site. (RV and hotel accommodations are available, at modest cost.)

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**The deadline for the May Newsletter is Wednesday, May 1, 2024.  
Thank You!**

# Welcome 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!



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SUNCOAST OUTDOORS



WILDWOOD MAGIC



Weather was perfect for our first BMTA - GATC joint hike on the Benton MacKaye Trail from Wilscot Gap to Skeenah Gap - approximately 5.3 miles.

We stopped for lunch about halfway but the conversation never stopped! Excellent group to hike with and very interesting conversations!

Photo courtesy of Hike Leader Kelly Motter. Pictured left to right are John Harris, Ro Rollings, Wilhelm Smith, Talitha Smith and Rudy Lind.