



### **SCENIC BEAUTY ALONG THE BENTON MACKAYE TRAIL**

With its glorious ridgeline views and the innumerable crossings of mountain streams, the 288-mile-long Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT) comes by its reputation for beauty honestly. Nestled in the Southern Appalachian Mountains, whether it's the creek-side trilliums in the spring, the reddish orange of the fall sugar maples at the higher elevations or the unmatched 360-degree views in the winter, the BMT is a visual treat any time of the year. Also known for its remoteness, a third of the trail lies in Wilderness areas where vehicular access and motorized tools are prohibited. Here, the hiker finds true peace and solitude — it truly is an awesome hike!

### **GEORGIA**

**Owen Vista** – Breath-taking views to the southeast of the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountain Range.

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

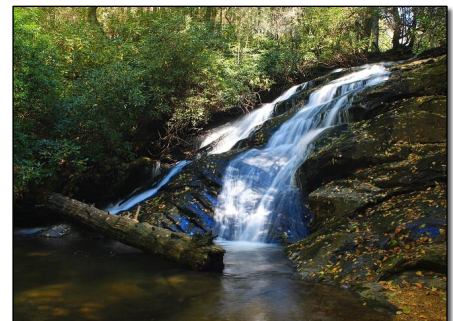
**Wallalah Overlook** - Views encompass the lower Toonowee Mountain ridge (or "Tooni" as the locals refer to it) and the higher John Dick peaks towering on the BMT beyond. All of the route on the BMT from the southern-most peak of the Tooni Mountain ridge southward to Springer Mountain is part of the highly protected Ed Jenkins National Recreation Area.

**Rhodes Overlook** – Exquisite views to the west and southwest.

**Swinging 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, Tooni Mountain offers awesome views of the valley to the east and the valley to the west below.

**Fall Branch Falls** – An easy half-mile hike to this 100' waterfall — a perfect jaunt for all, but especially for the kids.

**Dyer Gap >> Jacks River Trail/Dally Gap** – This section follows a pristine forest pathway adjacent to the South Fork of the Jacks River, passing by the Pinhoti National Recreational Trail. Highly recommended for swimming and fishing.



*Long Creek Falls*



*Trail Maintenance on Jacks River Section*

## **TENNESSEE**

**Big Frog Mountain** – At 4,224 feet, Big Frog Mountain is the dominant feature of the Big Frog Wilderness. A rocky knife edge outcrop just south of Chimneytop about a mile north of the crest offers great views toward Copperhill, Tennessee. The “Green Tunnel” on the west slope of Big Frog is a quarter mile straight stretch of leafy tunnel through dense rhododendron with an exquisite view from end to end.

The Big Frog Wilderness is a Black Bear Preserve. Other wildlife include deer, turkeys, and timber rattlers as well as a combination of Russian hogs, released in the 1960s, and domesticated hogs that escaped.

**Ocoee River** – Site of the whitewater events at the 1996 Summer Olympics. Kayakers, canoers and rafters continue to enjoy the thrill of navigating the challenging rapids.

**Thunder Rock Bridge** — In August, 2021, a new wilderness-style bridge replaced the previous bridge that was damaged by flooding in 2019.

**McFarland >> White Oak Flats** – The BMT runs parallel to Big Lost Creek. The waterway features cascades and waterfalls as it winds through a deep limestone gorge. The trail follows an old railroad grade built for logging in the early 1900s. Beautiful rock formations are on both sides of the trail.

**Hiwassee River** – The trail crosses the Hiwassee River, a designated National Scenic River popular with canoe and kayak enthusiasts as well as with avid trout fishermen.

**The Narrows** – A deep narrow canyon exposes fascinating rock formations. At high water levels the situation can change drastically, resulting in a roaring whitewater river. The river below the powerhouse is popular with canoers, kayakers and fly fishermen.



*Hiwassee River*

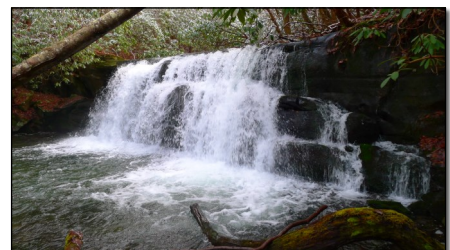
**Buck Bald** - Exquisite 360-degree views from this 2,348-foot mountain top.

**Waucheesi Bald** – Incredible views and a great camping site on the 3,692-foot high bald.

**Sandy Gap >> Sledrunner Gap** – Located at the edge of the Upper Bald River Wilderness, the section is known as the “Heart of Darkness” because it is difficult to access with heavy chainsaws and brushcutters. Its deep forests and remote solitude make it even more attractive to hikers. During the winter, there are great views off the sides of the mountain both into North Carolina and Tennessee. Sightings of bear and boar are common.

**Upper Bald River Falls** – An impressive ledge-type cascade waterfall nestled among emerald-green rhododendron.

**Tellico River** — The river is famous for trout fishing and for class IV and V canoeing and kayaking. A trout fish hatchery that raises huge breeder fish is just over the bridge.



*Upper Bald River Falls*

**Whigg Meadow >> Beech Gap** – “The Whigg,” an open meadow with panoramic views, is a high elevation bald (5,000 feet). This



section of the BMT crosses the historic Cherohala Skyway at the Unicoi Crest Overlook. This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Skyway, a mountainous scenic byway connecting Tellico Plains, Tennessee, with Robbinsville, North Carolina.

## **NORTH CAROLINA**

**Little Tennessee River >> Fontana Village** – Highlights include the Little Tennessee River with views down into the Little Tennessee Gorge and up into the Great Smoky Mountains.

**Bob Bald** – This mile-high bald offers exquisite views to the southwest.

**Naked Ground** – Enjoy watching the sunrise as it illuminates the delightful view from your campsite at Naked Ground in the Joyce-Kilmer Wilderness.

**Hangover** – The mile-high mountain top has 360° views, including into the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to the north.

**Lookout Rock** -- Beautiful overlook above Fontana Village, North Carolina.



*Naked Ground*

## **GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK**

**Fontana Dam >> Tunnel on the Road to Nowhere** — The trail features sporadic views of Fontana Lake. A few abandoned Ford automobiles lie rusting alongside the trail — left by their owners when fuel became too expensive during WWII.

**Upper and Lower Noland Creek** — Salamanders and wild ginseng can be found in abundance along the rapidly moving Noland Creek.

**Mount Sterling Fire Tower** – Decommissioned in the 1960s, today's hikers climb to the top for exquisite views – a great photo op for sunset pictures!



*Owen Vista*



*The Swinging Bridge over the Toccoa River*