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# State Of The Trail ... President David Blount ...

The BMTA Display has traveled much this year including trips to Amicalola Falls State Park, the Blue Ridge Trail Town Dedication, the Blue Ridge Arts in the Park Festival, and to Western Carolina University for the ATC Biennial Conference. Most recently the BMTA was represented at the Len Foote Hike Inn where Bob Ruby and Ralph Heller each gave a power point presentation for the evening program and at The Autumn Gold Festival in Coker Creek, Tennessee, where Rick Harris set up the display and gave out information.



The Fun hikes under the direction of Ralph Heller (averaging 2 per month) have been well attended this year and are introducing many people to the BMT for the first time. Ralph has gotten help from many volunteer leaders and co-leaders and especially from Sara and Jerry Bland who have been most active in the Easy Trek Series of hikes.

We dedicated our first ever Trail Town on the BMT in 2013. Ralph Heller headed up the effort and worked closely with the leadership of the City of Blue Ridge, Fannin County, and the Fannin County Chamber of Commerce. Look for the signs commemorating this accomplishment the next time you drive into Blue Ridge. Negotiations are underway between the BMTA and the city of Tellico Plains in Tennessee to dedicate a second Trail Town for the BMT. Rick Harris is heading up that effort and it looks like his patience and perseverance are going to pay off soon.

- President: David Blount
- Vice President: Darcy Douglas
- Secretary: Joy Forehand
- GA Maintenance: Tom Keene
- Smokies Coord: Bob Ruby
- TN/NC Maintenance: Bill Hodge
- Hiking: Ralph Heller
- Membership: Dick Evans
- Treasurer: Margaret Evans
- Publicity: Marge Heller
- Newsletter Editor: Gene Nix
- Conservation: Steve Bayliss
- Past President: Dick Evans
- State Rep GA: George Owen
- State Rep TN/NC: Rick Harris



**BMTA Headquarters**



The trail remains open and is overall in good shape. However, for a number of reasons, we have sections that did not receive recent maintenance and provide challenges for hikers, and more so, for backpackers. To correct these issues we need better reporting on the part of section maintainers and better oversight on the part of the board. Reporting means not only turning in hours for work accomplished but also giving notice that work can't or won't be performed for a given season or that it is time to find a new maintainer for the section. We depend on reports from the entire hiking community to stay abreast of problem areas and sections so don't hesitate to contact the State Maintenance Director or let us know through the Contact Us link on the website if you have something to report.

The Dyer Gap reroute begun in late 2012 was completed just a few months later in late winter of 2013. The project moved a portion of trail from a long standing road walk and placed it in the forest. Special thanks go to the Georgia Maintenance Posse comprised of Maintenance Director Tom Keene and his assistants Ralph Heller and George Owen.

It has been agreed this year that the section of trail crossing Towee Creek in Tennessee needs to be rerouted to eliminate an unsafe creek crossing in bad weather. The scoping process is nearly complete and the final decision to allow us to begin construction has been slowed by the recent government shut-down. We expect to receive approval soon.

The Tapoco property recently changed ownership and the forest area through which our trail has passed by way of easement is now being held by a conservation group until it can be transferred to the State of Tennessee for outdoor recreation and sporting purposes. This situation provides a unique opportunity for our trail to be rerouted away from the highway 129 crossing at Deals Gap and elimination of the road walk of several miles to Twenty Mile Ranger Station. This is not a done deal yet and exploration of this alternative route will begin on the ground later this month. Special thanks go out to Dick Evans for his research and contacts in pursuing this opportunity.

I remain extremely proud of the newsletter that Gene Nix puts out every month with the help of many who supply work and hike reports, trail news, and other items of interest to our membership. Special thanks go out to Gene and to Marge Heller for her work in the review and editing prior to publication. I am blessed with the board that I have serving in all the various capacities and the credit for the work and accomplishments of this organization go to them. They are truly a remarkable bunch of folks!

### Membership

Respectfully submitted,

David Blount, President

<b>Students &amp; Seniors</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Life</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Individual</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>Family</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Corporate</b>	<b>4</b>
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>290</i></b>

## Walter Cook Named Trail Maintainer Of The Year For 2013

Walter L. Cook of Bogart, GA was named Trail Maintainer of the Year for 2013 by the Benton MacKaye Trail Association on [November 2nd](#) at BMTA's Annual Meeting.

To earn the coveted annual award, Dr. Cook, a retired UGA forestry professor, gave his time and talent to helping maintain the Benton MacKaye Trail. Cook's section of the BMT that he personally maintains is known for the 260 foot suspension bridge over the Toccoa River.

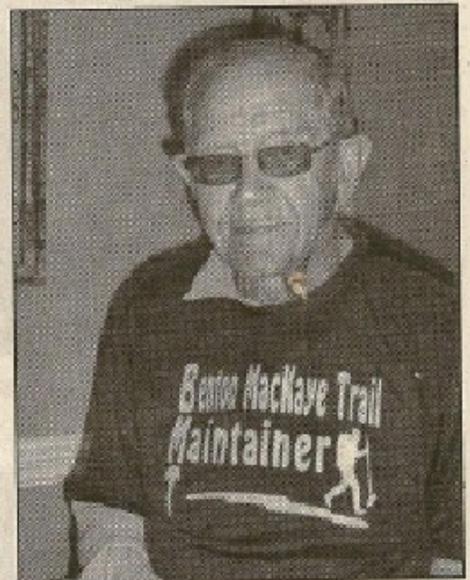


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# Heartfelt Thanks to BMTA members!!!

## By Darcy Douglas



I wish to extend a special thank you to some folks who made the Annual Meeting a success! Phyllis Jones cleaned the bathrooms prior to our meeting since they were not clean when we arrived. For this task we should all commend her! Meanwhile, her husband Ken worked with the electrical components of the building for us. They both assisted in other jobs prior to the arrival of most of the group from hiking. Linda Blount assisted greatly with food distribution and clean up. Margaret and Dick Evans handled the sales items beautifully, and managed the



Pay Pal and Square One signups for the meals ahead of time. Marge Heller was a real support with the publicity angles of the evening, and Ralph helped with coolers. Both Sara and Jerry Bland helped out, too, with coolers, drinks, and some last minute work around the room. Claire Broadwell helped get our food, and it's a good thing she did or it would have been about 30 minutes later arriving!! Tony Oldfield cleaned both bathrooms once again as the evening came to a close. Ginny Slack assisted with recycling items. David Blount and others took out our trash. Each of these individuals willingly offered their energy and time!!!

You folks may not realize how very much all these things mean, but I certainly do, and I wish to say a big THANK YOU!!!! If there is any person who helped whose name is not listed here, I apologize



profoundly. It was just amazing how many people stepped up to the plate and assisted, both before and after the meeting! I must hand it to David Blount, too! He has had this task, organizing and implementing the BMTA Annual Meeting, 4 times in the past. He has done an outstanding job each time, and I commend him especially since I now have a better understanding of how much work it is!

It is indeed a pleasure to be part of an organization with so many kind and able people willing to chip in to make the work lighter for all. Thanks, friends!!!!



# EASY TREKKERS

## TOCCOA RIVER SUSPENSION BRIDGE HIKE

### WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2013



By Sara Bland

On a crisp, fall morning 18 enthusiastic hikers headed out under a canopy of brilliant blue sky. (We were all ready to go after patiently waiting in the cool air for our shuttle drivers to return.) As we hiked along the Benton MacKaye Trail toward the ever-amazing 260-foot suspension bridge, many remarked on the immaculate condition of this 3.5 mile section of trail. We have Dr. Walter Cook, the trail's maintainer, to thank for that. Oh, wait Walter, we did find a few sticks out of place!



We arrived at the bridge ready for lunch and more socializing with our hiker buds. The highlight of lunch

was a "surprise" demonstration by Nancy Sauls on how to tie her Uncle Ray's knot. This came about due to conversation on the trail as to why our shoe strings kept coming untied. She decided to share the secret of her Uncle Ray's knot to the Easy Trekkers as shown in the picture. Afterwards, we had fun trying it for ourselves and after a little experience, some became quite proficient.

We are always thankful to have several "semi-professional" photographers with us to capture special moments and scenes along the trail. Walter Polk, Al Cash, Joy Forehand, and of course, Marge Heller



"Uncle Ray's Knot".

have blessed us over and over with wonderful pictures. We love being together and these pictures capture that.

As usual, I always think each hike could not have been any better (at least most of the time). This one certainly falls into that category. What a great group of people to be with and to hike with! Until next time, happy trails in life.



## UPCOMING HIKES ... by Ralph Heller - Hiking Director

November was a busy month with our Annual Meeting Hike Weekend. If you were not able to participate in any of those 4 hikes, you missed a great opportunity to get out in the woods. I have started working on the hiking schedule for next year. Be sure to sign up for the hike to the Hike Inn on [March 12](#). Details can be found at the bottom of this page.

The weather during the winter months is unpredictable weeks in advance, so I have decided to try something new for the winter period. When the weather looks good in the near future, about a week in advance, I will put out a notice for a potential hike. If there are enough folks interested, we will schedule the hike. This could be on a weekday as well as during the weekend. I will need to create a calling list to email to folks who would be interested in this program. Contact me if you are interested and let me know if a weekday is also doable. .

I will be organizing the hiking program and dates for the rest of the year and plan to have a variety of hikes. There will be at least 1 group camping trip and backpacking event. We will also schedule Easy Trek hikes for warmer weather. We will need hike leaders starting in March. I will be calling folks to sign up as hike leaders and to suggest hikes. Or contact me to volunteer to be a hike leader, suggest a hike, or if you have any suggestions for the hiking program. I can be reached at [rshbmta@gmail.com](mailto:rshbmta@gmail.com) or 770-235-9760.

## Hike Inn At Amicalola Reserved ... Make Your Reservations Now

**Good news!** I am happy to announce that the BMTA has the Hike Inn at Amicalola Falls State Park reserved for Wed. [March 12](#), 2014. We have all the rooms on hold for that date, so let's fill them up. There are just twenty rooms and it is first come first serve. This is always a popular event, so make your arrangements early. **The procedure is to call the Inn's reservations at 800-581-8032 to book your room. Tell them you are a BMTA member. Then let me know that you are signed up so that I can keep track of how many rooms are reserved.** We have made arrangements for a 50% discount, which comes to about \$86 for a room for two with dinner and breakfast included. This is a great deal! (My e-mail is: [rshbmta@gmail.com](mailto:rshbmta@gmail.com))



Bob Ruby and I were just up at the Inn recently to give BMTA presentations. There is now a framed BMTA map hanging on the wall in the reception area. It's a great place to hike to, the food is good, and the company is great. See you there!



## Save The Date ...

# Volunteer Vacation in the Tapoco Section ...

By Dick Evans

The American Hiking Society has approved the BMTA proposal for a Volunteer Vacation during the [May 4th](#) thru [May 10th](#) time frame to work on the proposed relocation of the BMT in the "Tapoco" Section west of Route 129 in Tennessee. We will need BMTA Volunteers to help with transport, supervision and other activities during this event. We anticipate that participants will stay at the Fontana Village Campground at the base of Fontana Dam, and travel to the Tapoco Section daily to work the treadway.



If you are interested in helping, save the dates and let Dick Evans know. ([dick.evans \(at\) frontier.com](mailto:dick.evans@frontier.com)).

One quick note is that this project has not been fully developed at this time, but the schedule required that we submit the proposal before walk thru and route selection. If for some reason the relocation cannot take place, alternate arrangements have been made to work in the existing trail locations in that area.

# Tenn/NC Work-trips...

By Gene Nix

Mud Gap to Beech Gap, in the Nantahala National Forest was brushed out by a BMTA crew while a week later another group started at the top of Sugar Mountain and cleared, brushed out, and cut blow downs to the Bald River road.

As reported by Tom Smith, it was a beautiful crisp clear autumn day. They met at the Green Cove Store at 9 AM, then set up their shuttle. The group started at the top of Sugar Mountain and went 1600 feet downhill to Campsite 11 on Bald River Road, a distance of about 4.5 miles. With crosscut saws they cleared several trees off the lower part of the section, some of which were locust and hard to cut through. They also cut several small trees with a hand saw and brushed out the trail with loppers and hand clippers. This section is 2.5 miles long and is now in excellent condition. As they hiked the Brookshire Creek Trail the 2 miles out to their truck, they also cleared a few trees off that trail to make the trail easily accessible to horses, but were not able to brush out this section. Several large logs were left but were easy to step over.



Keep close to Nature's heart... and break clear away, once in awhile, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean.

John Muir

# Young Harris Students ... Help Create Drainage Dips and Knicks ... Georgia Work-trip ... November 9th



## By George Owen, Trip Leader

About a dozen students and faculty from Young Harris College in Young Harris, GA joined six BMTA regular members [November 9](#) to work on the south uphill to the meadow on section 2a some two miles north of Three Forks to create drainage dips and knicks in this steep section of the Benton MacKaye Trail.

The students met a 15-passenger van in Young Harris at 8:00 a.m. to drive to the park-and-ride lot in Blairsville to join Taylor Hamilton and intern Josh Embry of the U.S. Forest Service for the long drive to Three Forks. Meanwhile, some BMTA members were also gathering at the Village Restaurant in Blue Ridge as well as at Three Forks, with all congregating ultimately at Three Forks. (Parking there, leader George Owen discovered he had a very flat left front tire, so tools were moved to another truck.)

The college student group was actually sorority members with some of their male friends. Rob Taylor and Jennifer Schroeder were professor sponsors of the trip. (MYSTERIOUS NOTE: When Rob arrived he announced he had twelve people in the van; this writer on his return home discovered he only had eleven on the sign-up sheet from the college. Subsequent checking between Rob and this writer could not resolve the discrepancy. Oh, well – the trip either had 19 or 20 folks total, depending.)

All then drove the final miles on Forest Service roads to the parking area just below the meadow crossing of the BMT. With safety and other instructions, we were all on the trail and working creating those drainages southward from the meadow by just after 10:00. Primary instruction to the students was carried out by Barry Allen and Taylor Hamilton.

Lunch was at 12:30, and included a short talk by George Owen to the students and others on public lands in the Southern Appalachians and their benefits. Professor Rob Campbell, adult coordinator of the group, is a leader in the Southern Appalachian Studies at the college, and your leader had promised to do this special presentation for him.



Pictured from left to right are John Michael Thomas (Young Harris College) and Steve Bayliss, Ralph Heller (BMTA)

After lunch most of us finished the work at hand on the southeast slope out of the meadow, while a little group of Ralph Heller and three others headed northward to install a new sign at No-Name Gap. (Q: “How many people does it take to install a BMT sign?” A: “Four – a supervisor, assistant supervisor, posthole digger operator, and finally one to drop the sign into the hole.”)

So sometime around 2:30 we all headed out to our respective places, including a small group to the Pink Pig. Now a steep slope of the BMT should drain much better. And, oh, thanks so much to Barry Allen, Steve Bayliss, and Gilbert Treadwell for all helping to replace the tire on the Owen truck. That was interesting: it was a bit complex getting to parts of this job, and each figured out portions of it. However, the “Most Intelligent Act Award” goes to Steve Bayliss, who finally decided to read the instructions!

**GUESTS:** Professor Rob Campbell, Maissa Donegan, Maddy Elledge, Katherine Gwin, Jacob Lee, Andy Lyons, Suzette Perrilioux, Professor Jennifer Schroeder, Nicole Smith, John-Michael Thomas, Grace Williamson

**MEMBERS:** Barry Allen, Steve Bayliss, Robert Collins, Ralph Heller, George Owen, Gilbert Treadwell

**FOREST SERVICE:** Josh Embry, Taylor Hamilton

**VOLUNTEER HOURS:** Work – 93.5      Travel – 54.0  
(Forest Service employees not included in these hours)



# Avoid holiday hassle - Join Dec. 14 GA Work-Trip!

**Leaders: Barry Allen and George Owen**

Come join us one and all to escape the holiday rush. We are refreshing the tread (sidehilling, etc.) of the BMT from Licklog/Wallalah Gap up Licklog Mountain. Modest work, great company. Our friends of the BMTA who live high on the side of Wallalah mountain are letting us drive to their home to avoid a mile of uphill hiking, putting us much closer to the work site.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS THIS TRIP - YOUR HELP REQUESTED:**

- 1. A few trucks to help haul us up a steep 1/3 mile to final parking area**
- 2. A USFS-certified chainsawyer to remove a few trees**
- 3. Someone to re-paint the blazes, now faded, and a few new ones** (if warm enuff)

Meet at either **8:00 a.m. at the Village Restaurant, Blue Ridge, for breakfast** (8:30 if not eating then) **or at 9:10 at Skeenah Creek crossing of the BMT on GA Hwy. 60** - short drive from the latter to our final parking site.

You are not required to sign up in advance, but if you wish more info, phone George Owen at 706-374-4716, evenings preferably.

We will seek to generally inform all by general BMTA email the day before of any plan change to another location if severe inclement weather should be forecast.

## Meet BMTA'S Newest Board Member

**By: Marge Heller**

BMTA's new Secretary, Joy Forehand, was born and raised as a city-girl in St. Louis. Joy always had a love of the outdoors as well as a love for horses and purchased her first horse in 1975. The hobby quickly snowballed from owning one horse to owning pleasure horses, breeding horses, show horses and race horses; from pleasure riding to showing over fences to exercising race horses. Eventually Joy became editor for a California all-breed horse magazine. Then her childhood dream came true ... she not only had her own horse to enjoy but she also ran the office of a Thoroughbred horse farm whose horses ran in the Kentucky Derby and other races including the Breeders' Cup and Arlington Million. After retiring in Blue Ridge, Joy and her husband Frank along with their yellow lab, Toccoa, developed a passion for hiking. Most days of the week they are on the BMT or one of the many trails in North Georgia. Joy and Frank also maintain Section 6c, Stanley Gap Trail and Joy was recently awarded, for the first time, a BMT Trail Maintainer's t-shirt for 2013.



## Newly Elected Board Members For 2013-2014



From Left to Right: Steve Bayliss, Dick Evans, Ralph Heller, Margaret Evans, David Blount, Joy Forehand, Bill Hodge, Marge Heller, Bob Ruby, and Darcy Douglas.

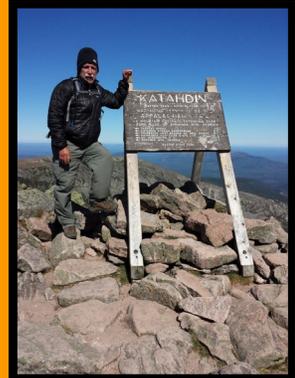
## Popeye, Geezer & Rabid ... by Marge Heller

As some **BMTA** members know, I've been following Ralph on the trail for almost 44 years. His love of the outdoors and hiking, in particular, has taken us down many different paths and given us lots of memorable experiences. Our retirement destination in the North Georgia Mountains not only gave us the opportunity to be near wonderful trails but also the chance to meet many new people with similar interests.

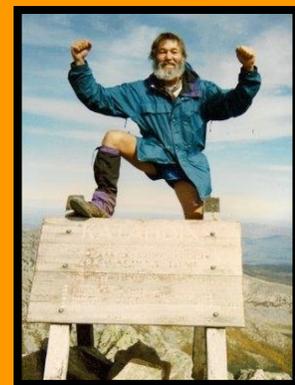
Last spring I had someone ask me if I knew anyone who had hiked the entire Appalachian Trail. And, I answered "yes - three." Afterwards, Ralph said to me, "did you ever think looking back at our lives that you would know **three AT hikers?**" I had to truthfully say - no! After all, we started married life in Miami. No mountains there.

The **BMTA** has **three members**, that I know of, who have hiked the Appalachian Trail. After speaking to each of them, I thought it might be interesting to share a little information, photos, and a few facts from their hikes:

**Larry Dumas** retired from the Navy **October 1978**. With his trail name of **Popeye**, Larry started on the AT **3/29/79** and finished **8/7/79**. The first month on the trail he lost 23 pounds. His favorite view was the 360 degree view from Kathadin. After completing the AT, he seriously considered doing it again. He didn't but he is part of a group of 22 thru-hikers that he met on the trail and he meets up with them every October to hike for a week. His group is called the front-loaders because of how they load their backpacks. Larry is an active **BMT** Maintainer, certified sawyer and personally maintains Section 5c, Brawley Mountain to Dial Road. In addition, he is very active with the Boy Scouts in Fannin County.



**Hank Baudet** retired from Bell South and, using the trail name of **Geezer** started the AT on **3/24/95**. He completed the hike on **9/25/95** and called it "One of the best experiences of my life." The most difficult section for Hank was in Pennsylvania due to the many rocks. PA was where he had his longest day hike -- 23 miles. In Palmerton PA, AT hikers were allowed to stay overnight in the town jail. Coldest day was on Mt. Washington, with 70 mph winds. Prettiest section: Virginia to Maine. Hiking since he was a Boy Scout, Hank tries to attend the AT event in Damascus almost every year. Hank first came to the **BMTA** by joining an Easy Trek hike. Since then he has been on many trail work days and was recently awarded his first **BMTA** Trail Maintainer t-shirt for 2013.



## Popeye, Geezer & Rabid ... by Marge Heller

**Collin Chambers**, known to many as the original owner of North Georgia Mountain Outfitters in Ellijay, started her journey on [3/16/10](#) and finished [9/15/10](#). Trail name was **Rabid**. When she reached her destination, Mt. Katahdin's weather was far from ideal -- 20's, driving rain, sleet, winds and snow. While on the AT, Collin wrote a daily blog. This I think sums up her feelings best: "Life on the trail is like a condensed lifetime. You can spend a few days with someone and feel like you truly have a friend for life."



I know of one other member who is currently section hiking and almost completed the AT. Travis Crouch, of **North Georgia Mountain Outfitters**, expects to finish by [September 2014](#). He has promised me a photo of reaching Mt. Katahdin so look for his story next Fall.

If any other **BMTA** member has completed the Appalachian Trail, please let our Newsletter Editor know and we will follow up.

# Wildflowers Of The BMT ... By Gracelyn Bayliss ...

Zoom Up  
To Enjoy The  
Pictures



Bloodroot



Star Chickweed



Woodland Blue Violet

**Gracelyn Bayliss**



Bluets



Mayapple



Blue Violet



Catesby's Trillium



Northern White Violet



Violet



Cut-leaved Toothwort



Serviceberry



White Trillium



Hairy Buttercup



Smooth Yellow Violet



Witchhazel



Halberd-leaved violet

Gracelyn Bayliss, known as the "Fairy Photographer", has provided us with a variety of Wildflower Pictures she has taken on her many hikes with her father Steve Bayliss. Steve and family are BMTA Trail Maintainers and Steve serves on the BMTA board of directors. Thank you so much Gracelyn for the pictures. With the weather we are having now, this gives us hope that Spring will be here soon.

## New and Renewed Members Since October 2013

- Stephen Bayliss Atlanta GA
- Sara & Jerry Bland Waleska GA
- Cynthia Flanders Turtletown TN
- Victoria and David Kelsey Palm Coast FL
- Tony Oldfield Stone Mountain GA
- Pam & Richard Sullivan Morganton GA
- Ken Cissna Ellijay GA
- Hubert Wieland Marietta GA
- Walter Polk Blue Ridge GA
- Frank and Joy Forehand Blue Ridge GA
- Hank Baudet Blue Ridge GA
- Scott & Angila Barker Copperhill TN
- Michael Pilvinsky Ellijay GA
- Bill & Laura Hodge Tellico Plains TN
- James Morgan Murphy NC
- Margaret Treadway Tifton GA
- Martina Palmour Dahlonega GA
- David Govus Ellijay GA
- David Paddock Marietta GA

### ^^^Membership Reminder^^^

I wanted to remind everyone that membership in the Benton MacKaye Trail Association runs with the calendar year and expires at the end of December, except of course for Life Members. Before we get into the Holiday Season and the winter hiking events, now is a great time to go to the website "[www.bmta.org](http://www.bmta.org)" and the membership page to renew. You can use your credit or debit card to pay, or print out a form to send in with your check. If you have any questions about your membership, address, phone or email corrections, just email me at "[bmta@frontier.com](mailto:bmta@frontier.com)". See you on the Trail!

**Dick Evans: Membership**