

ENJOY THE OPPORTUNITIES

BENTON MACKAYE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE PART OF EFFORT

Formed in 1980, the non-profit Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA) was created to construct, maintain and protect the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT).

Running from Springer Mountain in Georgia to Big Creek Campground on the northern edge of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and featuring Blue Ridge, Georgia, as an official Benton MacKaye Trail Town, the 300-mile long BMT passes through some of the most remote back

country in Georgia, Tennessee and North Carolina, including eight federally designated wilderness and wilderness study areas.

A diverse group of individuals, BMTA members enjoy hiking, backpacking and camping, said BMTA Vice President Joy Forehand. "Many participate in BMTA's all-volunteer group of trail maintainers who are dedicated to keeping the trail open and in good shape for other hikers – they are 'leaving a footpath for generations to follow,'" she said.

Hiking opportunities on the BMT abound in the Fannin/Gilmer county areas – Springer Mountain, Long



Hiker Phil Guhl captured the Swinging Bridge with several inches of snow.

Creek Falls, The Swinging Bridge, Brawley Fire Tower and Falls Branch Falls. BMT hikes tailored for peaceful solitude can be found in the Cohutta and Big Frog Wilderness areas, said Forehand.

Learn more about BMTA at www.bmta.org or contact Joy Forehand at jwfbgrga@gmail.com or 386-334-0336. Maps for these and other hikes are available from the Fannin County Chamber of Commerce.