

BMTA Year End Reports November 7, 2020

Outreach Director Annual Report – Bob Cowdrick

This past year we have engaged local community organizations and have invited them to participate in our Saturday BMTA trail days. These organization included Georgia State University, Emory University, Georgia Tech University, University of North Georgia, and multiple Boy Scout troops. Since March 2020 there very little participation by community groups except for a Boy Scout Troop joining us for trail work in TN this past September. Outreach activities will hopefully continue and grow once organizations deem it safe to participate.

Conservation Director Annual Report – Dave Ricker

COVID 19 made it a difficult year for race organizers and the BMTA. Even with the mandatory closing of the trail, we saw what I believe to be a record number of hikers on the BMT from April – October this year. Adding to that, most races scheduled during the COVID shutdown had already been approved by the USFS and most rescheduled and ran their races later in the year, when USFS opened the trail. Because the race organizations had been granted USFS approval for their respective races, USFS did not send a scoping letter containing the rescheduled dates of those races which meant the BMTA had no notification of the rescheduled races except by monitoring each race website. We had no problems with any of the races until the Blue Ridge Ultra, October 10.

Jeff Leininger, ARGeorgia continues to be a problem. Joy & Frank Forehand hiked Section 4 after the Blue Ridge Ultra which was held on October 10. They found stacks of race markers and trash just tossed into the woods off the trail. They have 15 excellent pictures that I am sharing with the USFS Ranger District to discuss actions needed to correct. In addition, ARGeorgia is advertising a new race to be held April 10-11, 2021, The Endurance Hunter 100-mile race, from Blue Ridge to Chatsworth, GA. The website says details about the race are still being negotiated. USFS has not issued a scoping notice for this race. I am in contact with Warren Carver, USFS, to see if the district knows anything about the race. The course description looks identical to the previous race ARGeorgia wanted to run (“The BMTA 100 Wilderness Race”) on BMT treadway from Blue Ridge to the Pinhoti Trail System (ie through Sisson Properties and on up on Sections 7B-8H). We called immediately and in no uncertain terms, told them to take our name off as sponsors and further, we absolutely will fight to NOT have the race on the course described. But now, here it is again and it sure looks the same course that we objected to before. They even advertise on the website that the race will be held on the beautiful BMTA and Pinhoti Trail systems. I will keep the board informed on what USFS says and what action will be taken.

Attached is the current race schedule for 2021. All race organizations have been trending toward informing racers of their need to give back to the community and help maintain the

trails – except for ARGeorgia. We have seen an uptick in racers showing up in Georgia for scheduled maintenance days.

Upcoming Scheduled Races affecting the BMT treadway:

Georgia Death Race (2020 reschedule) Nov 7-8, 2020

Affected Treadway 3A, 3B, 3C, 2D, 2C, 2B, 2A
Race runs from Vogel State Park to Amicola Falls
Race applications require 8 hrs volunteer trail maintenance/service time
No stated alternate routes for inclement weather or possible changes due to weather.

Fierce Dragon 200/100/40-mile Jan 12-17, 2021

Affected Treadway 3B, 3C
Races run loops between Vogel State Park to Skeenah Gap (on the Duncan Ridge trail)
Full Fury (200-mile) Jan 12 – Jan 15 (website says starting Tues, ending Fri.)
Firestarter (100-mile) Jan 15 – Jan 17 (Friday to Sunday)
Flintstrike (40-mile) Jan 16 – Jan 17 (Saturday – Sunday)
No alternate race plan available due to inclement weather. However, USFS says they have the authority and will exercise that authority to shut down any race that occurs in violent and/or dangerous weather conditions.

[Endurance Hunter 100 Trail Run] [April 10-April11, 2021] [No official SUP Application filed yet]

[possible affected treadway: 7B,7C, 7D, 8A, 8B,8C, 8D, 8E, 8F, 8G]
[At this time, the BMTA has not been notified by a USFS scoping notice of this Intended race sponsored by ARGeorgia. If paperwork does appear, we will vigorously oppose it.]

Georgia Death Race March 27-28, 2021

Affected Treadway 3A, 3B, 3C, 2D, 2C, 2B, 2A
Race runs from Vogel State Park to Amicola Falls
Race applications require 8 hrs volunteer trail maintenance/service time
No stated alternate routes for inclement weather or possible changes due to weather.

Blue Ridge Adventure Race May 7 – May 8, 2021

Affected treadway: Unknown. Because it is a navigational, point to point race, ARGeorgia told USFS Blue Ridge Ranger District that they do not use any Established trail. Jeff Leininger (President? Marketing Director??) told me differently – that they have always used portions of the BMT for their running portion of the race. Look on their web page, 2019 recap picture -- it shows racers running across Swinging Bridge. <https://youtu.be/X0BSLj5VrcM>

Cruel Jewel 100 & 50 mile Races May 14 -- May 16, 2021

Affected treadway: 3C,4A,4B,5A,5B,5C,5D,6A,6B,6C,6D

The 100-mile race begins and ends in Vogel State Park. The race course intersects The BMT at Rhodes Mountain, continues through Skeenah Gap, crosses Hwy 60, runs across Swinging Bridge and continues on the BMT until Section 6d, then they turn and loop back to Vogel.

The 50mile race: Racers will be shuttled from Vogel to the turn point for the 100 mile race (Camp Morganton) and then run the 2nd half of the 100-mile race ending at Vogel.

Blue Ridge Ultra 50k, 30k & 15k Races October 9, 2021

Affected treadway: 5C,5B,5A,4B,4A

Races start at the Iron Bridge Café, Aska Road and run 16 miles on the BMT.

No alternate course for inclement, bad weather conditions.

Farm to Trail 30k & 11k November 6, 2021

Affected treadway: 6D

Don Burkett is the race organizer for this event. We couldn't ask for a more helpful and conscientious race organizer. Don & his wife Susan are members of the BMTA, they have participated in several scheduled BMTA maintenance days (including last year's snowstorm) and Don posts on race organizer's bulletins the link for BMTA upcoming maintenance days. Don also mandate that his racers document volunteer hours for trail maintenance.

TN/NC Maintenance Director's Report – Richard Harris

Since the last meeting we have pretty much caught up on maintenance issues in the TN/NC corridor. Most trees are off the trail and the trail is mostly brushed out. But, of course, this is an ongoing task. As soon as we complete a section, we hear of new trees down on the trail or regrowth of brush. Examples are the sections along the Hiwassee. We cleared the trail, then we had to go out just one week later to clear another 9 trees off the section from Coker Creek to Lost Creek. Also, the brush grows up very quickly under the Kimsey Hwy powerlines and where they did logging adjacent to the Kimsey Hwy crossing. We have been getting compliments from hikers on the condition of the trail.

Even though GA was hit hard by Hurricane Zeta, it appears the TN sections fared fairly well based on reports from hikers and thru-hikers as well as section maintainer reports.

We have a few new maintainers for sections in TN.

13c Big Bend to Towee – Boe Rudder

13d Towee to Wildcat Creek – Mary Alton and Ann Anderson

13e Wildcat to Coker Creek – Steve and Conner Bayliss

14a Coker Cr to TN68 – Lynette Linn

15c Six Mile to Sandy Gap – Rick Parks

There are still several sections available for adoption

The AHS Volunteer Vacation was cancelled by AHS due to COVID-19. We have elected to not reschedule this VV for 2021 since we would have difficulty protecting the workers from the virus. Maybe we can retry in 2022.

Membership Report – Frank Forehand

In spite of cancellations of all festivals but one, fiscal 2020 certainly has been a stellar year for BMTA. We crossed the 500 mark in memberships ... ending the year with 533 members!

BMTA's 2020 Memberships are up 38% over last year!



2020 BMTA Report - Member Roster Membership Type Stats

Total Corporate Memberships	12
Total Family Memberships	127
Total Family Life Memberships	13
Total Honorary Memberships	2
Total Individual Memberships	234
Total Life Memberships	47
Total Student/Retired Memberships	98
TOTAL MEMBERSHIPS	533

Monday, November 2, 2020

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We have two new Corporate Members for fiscal 2021 ... the Ocoee Animal Hospital in Blue Ridge, GA, and Collin Chambers' Wildwood Magic.

It's Time to "leave a footpath for generations to follow"!

Remember, each year, those who join or donate to BMTA are "... leaving a footpath for generations to follow"! To renew your membership, go to <https://bmta.org/product/membership/>.

By making a donation of \$50, \$100, \$250, \$500 – for any donation over \$50, you will receive a Family or Individual membership for fiscal 2021. Go to <https://bmta.org/product/donate/> to donate and renew.

Georgia Maintenance Report – Phil Guhl

This year has been a challenge. A snowstorm and COVID-19 have reduced the number of maintenance trips/days available to work the trail; however, overall the Georgia trail has remained in fairly current and good condition. Spotty blowdowns have been addressed by Gilbert Treadwell and Dave Ricker. The maintenance trips have been focused primarily on upkeep (brushing and water diversions).

Currently, Hurricane Zeta has caused havoc in the Georgia forests. Bob Cowdrick has volunteered and been assigned the role of Hurricane Zeta Response Coordinator. He is organizing and coordinating scouts and saw crews. The USFS has also been notified of his role.

All communication concerning Zeta damage and response are to go through or be with Bob. Tennessee and North Carolina USFS sawyers have been requested by Barry Allen. Those sawyers will work through Bob Cowdrick's direction.

Blue Ridge and Conasauga Ranger Districts have indicated that saw certifications that expired in 2020 have been extended to October 2021. If a saw certification expired in 2019 or earlier, that sawyer is no longer certified and will have to go through full certification, i.e., not be recertified. Due to the number of estimated sawyers on the trail, the USFS report they will be more vigilant in checking sawyers while working. A sawyer must 1) Have a current saw certification, 2) Have a current First Aid certification, 3) Have the appropriate PPE (chainsaw chaps, helmet, gloves, eye protection, hearing protection) on while working, and 4) Practicing safe saw practices.

New maintainers or maintainers with new sections:

Kathy Williams – Section 7 – Weaver/Laurel Cr. Rd. >> GA Hwy 515

Dave and Sue Ricker – Section 08G – Double Hogpen Gap >> Flat Top Mountain

Don Burkett – Section – Section 06D – Stanley Gap Trail >> Weaver/Laurel Creek Road

No Georgia sections are currently available.

Construction projects:

- Thunder Rock Campground footbridge
 - Yet to start
 - Barry Allen is managing the overall project with the USFS
- Long Creek Falls footbridge
 - In planning phase
 - Bob Cowdrick is managing the overall project with Barry Allen

Publicity Report – Joy Forehand

With the exception of the AT Kickoff, held before the “shelter in place” order, all events were cancelled.

The large 5 x 3 state maps & 4 x 5 map of the entire BMT for BMTA's Publicity tent have arrived! They will be used in the tent at future festival events.

BMTA will resume festival attendance, including the popular inter-active crosscut, as soon as the COVID-19 is resolved.

Stewart Holt, GATC's cartographer, graciously donated his time and expertise to create the four maps. Thanks to an anonymous donor, there was no charge for printing the maps either. Below is the 4 x 5 map of the entire BMT.

The maps include the BMT and AT as well as way points, elevations, roads, landmarks, nearby towns, etc.



The number of subscribers in Mail Chimp continues to grow ... we are now at 1,352 subscribers. That includes 534 subscribed BMTA Members (2020 or 2021) and 741 Prospective Members for 2021!

The FB Association page has 4,452 followers.

The Maintenance page has 285 followers.

The Benton MacKaye Trail Hikers page has 1009 members.