



# BENTON MacKAYE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

"...leaving a footpath for generations to follow."

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## Annual Meeting Brings Changes

Bill Ristom

The 2007 annual meeting; held November 3 at the UGA Mountain Experiment Station auditorium, near Blairsville, GA; was overshadowed by murky workings in the background. First, ongoing hostilities caused one key board member to withdraw from the slate of officers presented by the Nominating Committee. Nominations from the floor then filled that position and shuffled others around in unexpected ways. The proposed bylaws changes were exploited divisively, even though they had been removed from consideration weeks before the meeting.

The power struggle is between those who champion moving the BMTA forward (the "Progressives") and those who want to keep it as it is, or even take it back a few years (the "Regressives"). The Progressives want to transform the BMTA into a professional, world-class organization akin to ATC or ETA. (Full disclosure: The author, though politically conservative, is a BMTA Progressive. And no, he hasn't been watching too much of the presidential races!)

Having gained two board seats, the Regressives, unless converted over, will now be able to stifle Progressive initiatives in this term. Things like meaningful reorganization, multi-year and other longterm memberships, and attaining National Scenic Trail status may have to wait. ☉

### Hikers and Leaders Wanted

Bob Ruby, BMTA Hiking Chair

The BMTA Board has appointed me Chair of the new Hiking Committee with the mission of encouraging and organizing more recreational hiking. For over twenty-five years BMTA has necessarily emphasized trail building and trail maintenance. Without de-emphasizing the importance of trail maintenance, the Board feels it is now time for more focus on hiking this marvelous trail.

Past participation in Fun Hikes has been fairly light. Some of this is due to the emphasis on trail building, and some of it is due to the fact that our members are spread over several states, making for longer drives. But we hope that more variety will encourage increased participation in future hikes.

I would appreciate your feedback on what type of hikes you would most like to see us organize and how to increase participation:

- ◆ Day hikes, two-day backpacks, extended backpacks?
- ◆ Which states or parts of the trail?
- ◆ Hikes on the BMT or hikes including various intersecting trails and loops?
- ◆ How often: monthly, quarterly, more frequent?
- ◆ Weekends only or some mid-week hikes?
- ◆ Slow and easy, fast and strenuous, or somewhere in-between?
- ◆ Seasonal preferences?
- ◆ Scheduled far ahead? (GATC announces its hikes a year in advance.)
- ◆ Newsletter write-ups before and/or after?

Please send your feedback on these questions and any other issues to [HikingChair@BMTA.org](mailto:HikingChair@BMTA.org).

The Hiking - Committee currently includes: Steve Cartwright - Coordinator Tennessee hikes, Dick Evans - Coordinator Smokies hikes, and myself - Georgia hikes. If you would like to be a hike leader, please contact me (404-242-8888) or the appropriate coordinator. ☉

### Newsletter Update

Fallout from the annual meeting caused a diversion of resources that led to first the postponement, then the cancellation of the November/December edition.

Apologies to members on that missing issue, also for this greatly truncated one. The normal version should return in March.

### Dues are Due and the BMTA Needs You!

Ken Jones, Membership Chair

The new membership year has started, and the BMTA needs your support now more than ever. The entire BMT was completed over 2 1/2 years ago, and we still have some sections in the middle that have not received any maintenance since well before the start of construction. Your continued support as a member is needed so that the organization can continue to focus on maintaining and protecting our fantastic resource for hikers. Please take the time to renew your membership today by mailing in your dues for 2008.

### BMTA Officers at Close of 2007 Annual Meeting

President: ..... Betty J. Petty  
 Vice President: ..... Ralph Heller  
 Secretary: ..... Diana Ristom  
 GA Maintenance: ..... Tom Keene  
 TN/NC Maintenance: ..... Bill Lundin  
 Smokies Maint.: ..... Jim Lumpkins  
 Construction: ..... George Owen  
 Recreation: ..... Bob Ruby  
 Membership: ..... Ken Jones  
 Treasurer: ..... Darcy Douglas  
 Public Relations: ..... Kevin O'Quinn  
 Media: ..... Bill Ristom  
 Conservation: ..... Eric Eades  
 Past Pres.: ..... Steve Cartwright  
 State Rep. - GA: ..... Walt Cook  
 State Rep. - TN: ..... Linda Davis  
 State Rep. - NC: ..... Dan Muse

## Work Trips, Fun Hikes and Other Events

Please call the trip leader prior to the event to confirm meeting times, places, and arrangements.

**January 12 Tennessee/North Carolina Work Trip:** If the weather cooperates, we will be sidehilling on a 1/4-mile stretch of section 16a (parking at Sandy Gap and walking north). Pulaskis and fire rakes will be supplied. Please contact leader Eric Eades, [dawg1980@hotmail.com](mailto:dawg1980@hotmail.com), 706-313-0873, for meet times.

**January 26 Georgia Work Trip:** The main job is to refresh sidehilling on Section 6 between Scroggin Knob and Rocky Mountain. Meet at the Village Restaurant in Blue Ridge at 8:00 AM. Or meet at the Weaver Creek Road trailhead at 8:45 AM. Trip leaders are Ralph Heller, 770-235-9760 (c), 706-636-3497 (h); and Tom Keene, 770-422-4838 or, the night before only, 770-722-6016.

**February 9 North Carolina/Tennessee Work Trip:** Location to Be Announced. For information, please contact Bill Lundin, 423-344-0823.

**February 23 Georgia Work Trip:** We will again work on the Great Wallalah-Licklog reroute on Section Three, but will walk in from the other direction, from Skeenah Gap. Meet at the Village Restaurant in Blue Ridge at 8:00 AM. Or meet at the trailhead at Skeenah Gap Road at 9:00 AM. Trip leaders are George Owen, [gowen2@tds.net](mailto:gowen2@tds.net), 706-374-4716; and Tom Keene, [tkeene@kennesaw.edu](mailto:tkeene@kennesaw.edu), 770-422-4838 or, the night before only, 770-722-6016.

**March 8 Tennessee/North Carolina Work Trip:** Location to Be Announced. For information, please contact Bill Lundin, [MaintDir\\_TN-NC@BMTA.org](mailto:MaintDir_TN-NC@BMTA.org), 423-344-0823.

**March 22 Georgia Work Trip:** We will again work on the Great Wallalah-Licklog reroute on Section Three. Meet at the Village Restaurant in Blue Ridge at 8:00 AM. Trailhead meeting place to be named after the February trip. Trip leaders are George Owen, [gowen2@tds.net](mailto:gowen2@tds.net), 706-374-4716; and Tom Keene, [tkeene@kennesaw.edu](mailto:tkeene@kennesaw.edu), 770-422-4838 or, the night before only, 770-722-6016.

**April 5 North Carolina/Tennessee Work Trip:** Location to Be Announced. For information, please

contact Bill Lundin, 423-344-0823. (This trip is tentative.)

**April 26 Annual Walk-Thru:** Start the hiking season out right with a spring jaunt on the BMT. This annual tradition keeps us on top of what needs tending to in the southern 200 miles of trail. Hikers can choose one or more sections to walk, or have one assigned (two hikers-per-section for safety). Shuttle drivers are needed also. Please contact Tom Keene, [tkeene@kennesaw.edu](mailto:tkeene@kennesaw.edu), 770-422-4838, for trail in Georgia or Bill Lundin, [MaintDir\\_TN-NC@BMTA.org](mailto:MaintDir_TN-NC@BMTA.org), 423-344-0823, for TN or NC.

**May 10 Tennessee/North Carolina Work Trip:** Location to Be Announced. For information, please contact Bill Lundin, [MaintDir\\_TN-NC@BMTA.org](mailto:MaintDir_TN-NC@BMTA.org), 423-344-0823.

**May 24 Georgia Work Trip:** We will again work on the Great Wallalah-Licklog reroute on Section Three. Meet at the Village Restaurant in Blue Ridge at 8:00 AM. Trailhead meeting place to be named after the February trip. Trip leaders are George Owen, [gowen2@tds.net](mailto:gowen2@tds.net), 706-374-4716; and Tom Keene, [tkeene@kennesaw.edu](mailto:tkeene@kennesaw.edu), 770-422-4838 or, the night before only, 770-722-6016.

**June 14 North Carolina/Tennessee Work Trip:** Location to Be Announced. For information, please contact Bill Lundin, [MaintDir\\_TN-NC@BMTA.org](mailto:MaintDir_TN-NC@BMTA.org), 423-344-0823.

**June 28 Georgia Work Trip:** Location to Be Announced. For information, please contact Tom Keene, [tkeene@kennesaw.edu](mailto:tkeene@kennesaw.edu), 770-422-4838.

### — FS 58 Reopens —

Good news for any and all who would normally access the Springer Mt./Three Forks area by FS 58 from the north: After an extended closure for repairs from water damage, it was reopened the second week of December.

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**Benton MacKaye Trail Association**  
 P.O. Box 53271  
 Atlanta, GA 30355-1271

[www.BMTA.org](http://www.BMTA.org)

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 US Postage  
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 Chattanooga, TN  
 Permit No. 836



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 BOB RUBY  
 680 N ISLAND DR NW  
 ATLANTA GA 30327-4618