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Sunrise Photo at the Hike Inn by: **Ralph Heller**



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## Easy Trek Hikes Begin...By Marge Heller

Looking for a gentle hike through the woods? If so, the Benton MacKaye Trail Association may be your answer. The BMTA has added a new category of less demanding hikes designed for the fit beginner or the hiker who just enjoys a little slower pace to enjoy the scenery. The hikes will include opportunities for fellowship and a picnic on the trail or nearby.

The first Easy Trek Hike to be held on April 7th, on the shoreline of Carter's Lake, is full with a total of 24 hikers registered and a few more hikers on the wait list! Two more Easy Trek Hikes will follow this

Spring: Saturday, April 28 (details to be announced) and Saturday, May 19 (BMTA Past President Ralph Heller will be the Hike Leader on a 5-mile section of the BMT).



Sara and Jerry

The new Easy Trek Hikes Leader is Sara Bland, BMTA Secretary. She and her husband Jerry enjoy a variety of outdoor activities including kayaking, bicycling and hiking with friends on the BMT.

To register for the two upcoming Spring Easy Trek hikes, contact Sara Bland by calling [770-366-6053](tel:770-366-6053) (cell) or [jsbland@yahoo.com](mailto:jsbland@yahoo.com) for meeting time and location. Don't forget to bring a bagged lunch. No dogs please. Non-members welcome.

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



## President's Column... Dick Evans

### Trail Standards Card

As part of the preparation for the Maintainer Training Session, covered by Gene Nix's article elsewhere, we prepared (with Gene's graphics expertise) a Trail Standards Card for Trail Maintainers. This is a synopsis of the US Forest Service Standards for clearing and maintaining trails. While there are several levels and types of trails, this card, the first of a projected series, is for what is designated a "Hiker/Pedestrian Class 2 Type Trail," the most common designation for sections of the BMT that we maintain. If you are an assigned Section Maintainer and did not attend the training session, your State Maintenance Director, Tom Keene or Rick Harris, has a card for you, just get in touch with them. Others, please feel free to download and print out as many copies as you like. The information is all "public domain", but we certainly appreciate Gene Nix's putting it in a usable format. This card will be on the website for future reference. Because we anticipate that changes will be made, the "First Edition" will be a collectors item, but certainly we will upgrade and change some things. Once we are fairly certain we have a complete and accurate card, we may produce them in a more reliable stock, but for now, this will meet our needs. We anticipate a series of 4-6 cards on different topics, laminated, pocket-sized reference for trail maintenance. If you have any suggestions for these cards, please let me know at "[President@bmta.org](mailto:President@bmta.org)".



### Annual Walk-Thru

I am really excited that all the sections of the BMT outside of the Smokies had been signed up for by folks to walk thru and evaluate the Trail. This evaluation is essential for the State Maintenance Directors to properly plan the years work trips and highlight problem areas. It is not a "checking up" on the Section Maintainers, but rather a fresh look at the section thru the eyes of someone not familiar with it. We really appreciate a careful and accurate evaluation of the sections you choose to walk.

### Hats and Shirts and the On Line Store

Most of you know we are in the process of putting our merchandise in an "on line" format for electronic sales. The publications page has been up for a couple of months, and we should have the rest of the materials up by the end of April. We'll have some photos in the next newsletter.

### A Request

As a trail maintaining (and enjoying) group, many of us spend a great deal of time in the woods. Despite this experience, we still need to keep in mind the 10 essential items to carry in the woods. This was brought to mind in the last week by learning of three searches for missing hikers in the area, two separate incidents in the National Park and a couple lost in the Joyce Kilmer Slickrock Wilderness. At the time of writing, the Joyce Kilmer couple had been found, but the folks in the Park are still missing. A common element seems to be the lack of a map for many of these cases. While the advent of GPS enabled phones, digital tablets and the like has made it easier for folks to get information, the inherent limitations of such devices can leave the unwary in a difficult position in the event of failure. If you are hiking, please carry a map, they don't need batteries.

Have a great early Spring and join us on a work trip or easy hike. Just look at the calendar for the details and contact information.

Dick Evans

## BMTA American Hiking Society Volunteer Vacation

April 22-28, 2012

TN/NC Section of the BMT. . . . .By Rick Harris

The BMTA is again sponsoring an AHS Volunteer Vacation. The one last fall was a great success and we were specifically asked by the AHS to sponsor another one this year. Again, the 8 volunteers will be staying in the Ranger House at the Tellico District Ranger Station near Tellico Plains. The VV filled up quickly several months ago and a waiting list was created. But we are limited to only 8 volunteers by the capacity of the Ranger House.

We need lots of help from BMTA members to make this one as successful as last year. Rick Harris will again be coordinating the work week. Bob Ruby will be there every day as well, volunteering his time for the whole week.



The crew will work on the BMT on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. We will meet each day at 8 AM at the Ranger Station and carpool the crew to the work site. We plan to be back at the Ranger House each day by 4 PM or so. We need 3 or 4 BMTA volunteers for each day to make the trip successful. Please volunteer for any or all days by letting Rick Harris know (423-263-6358 or [HarrisRi@aol.com](mailto:HarrisRi@aol.com)). We will most likely be doing tread repair, locations to be determined based on our walkthroughs.

Also, each evening at 7PM, we will be giving a PowerPoint presentation to the volunteers in the Ranger House. Last year's topics included:

- An overview of the BMTA and the Cherokee National Forest
- Working cooperatively with other user groups such as horsemen, mountain bikers, and trail bikers
- Bear management and bear reintroduction into the Cumberland Plateau
- Wilderness including trail maintenance in wilderness areas

The crew last year loved our presentations. If you have an idea for a presentation for this year or might like to actually give a presentation, let Rick Harris know.

Wednesday for the crew is a free day. They are permitted to do things on their own in the area such as hiking, rafting, kayaking, or mountain biking. But Wednesday night will again be pizza, beer, and mountain music at the Outpost in Tellico Plains. Other BMTA members are invited to attend. The BMTA buys the pizzas.

Please look over your calendar and see what days or evenings you might be able to volunteer, then contact Rick Harris to sign up.

# Trail Maintenance Seminar Big Success..



The BMTA trail building and maintenance seminar was a huge success. The seminar, which was well attended, was held at the Ocoee Whitewater Center on March 10<sup>th</sup>. It featured speakers from the USFS as well as many experts from our own association. A lunch of chili and a variety of desserts were provided. Attendees had an opportunity to discuss the standards that we have established for our trail maintenance and discuss what the USFS uses and recommends for their workers. Standards and techniques of trail maintenance were emphasized to allow our maintainers the knowledge and expertise needed to consistently maintain our high standard along the BMT's total length.



Matthew Henry, USFS Cheoah District, and Steve Biatowas, USFS Ocoee District, began our day discussing trail specifications relating to Hiker-Pedestrian, Class 2 parameters. Steve also discussed job hazards and mitigation as it relates to all trail workers.

Dick Evans, BMTA President, next lead in a round robin discussion of PPE, personal protective equipment, as it pertains to our Trail Maintenance Cards. Dick also commented on trail standards that relates to the Benton MacKaye Trail.



**Presenters**

After a short break, long time Construction Director Ken Jones, led a discussion on Tailgate Safety Briefings. Ken's coverage showed how you go from the general guidelines and adapt them to the specific task for that day. Such as selection of tools, equipment, evacuations, and first aid plan.

Rick Harris and Ralph Heller followed by speaking on the Annual Walk Thru and the procedures for reporting trail conditions. Rick also spoke on Monthly Work Trip Information. He talked about reporting hours and a number of topics relating to our trail maintenance program.

Dick finished our morning discussions by speaking about Injury Reporting and Workers Compensation.

After lunch, Jim Holland, BMTA member, lead a group dealing with Trail First Aid while another group enjoyed a hands on demonstration concerning trail standards and maintenance.

Back  
Packing  
is the art  
of  
knowing  
what not  
to take.

SHERIDAN  
ANDERSON

## Smokies Backcountry Camping Fee Approved. . .

**Bob Miller**  
**Management Assistant**  
**Great Smoky Mountains National Park**

**GATLINBURG** -Great Smoky Mountains Superintendent Dale A. Ditmanson has announced that the Park's proposal to begin collecting for the use of the Park's backcountry campsites and shelters has been approved by the National Park Service. This approval clears the way for the Park to move forward with developing an on line system to collect fees beginning in 2013 for reserving and use of the Park's backcountry by overnight hikers and equestrians.



The Park developed the plan in order to improve its trip-planning and reservation services to users and to expand its backcountry Ranger presence to better protect park resources through enforcement of food-storage and other regulations and improved visitor education regarding Leave-No-Trace principles.

The proposal was open for public comment last summer and some 230 written comments and two petitions were received during the comment period. According to Ditmanson, the public comments provided a great deal of constructive input on the concerns Park backcountry users had about the fee plan. "Many commenters were under the misconception that the Smokies is legally prohibited from charging user fees. The Park is prohibited from charging a toll or license fee from motorists crossing Park roads, by language in a 1951 deed under which the ownership of some park roads was transferred from the State of Tennessee to the National Park Service. But, we have long been authorized to collect user fees for specific activities such as front country camping, weddings, and commercial filming."

"There was also a significant amount of concern about our initial plan to utilize the same computerized federal reservation system, [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) that virtually all national parks use to reserve drive-in sites in front country campgrounds. We acknowledge that some of the policies, such as the lead time for making reservations and cancellations, are not a good fit for more spontaneous backcountry users.

We will not use that system unless we are convinced that it can provide the level of service we want to offer, and are exploring the alternative of developing a stand-alone software program tailored specifically to the Smokies. The system developed will also need to be practicable for Appalachian Trail thru hikers whose itineraries evolve from day-to-day."

"Concern was also raised about the range of fee amounts that were under consideration and that the resulting revenues may be diverted to other programs. We have decided to focus our plans around the lowest and simplest of the fees under study: \$4 per night per person. Most importantly, 100% of the revenue from this program will be invested in improving back-country services through extended hours of the back-country office, trip-planning assistance, on-line reservations, and protection of park resources through increased ranger staff."

Now that the proposal has been approved, Park managers plan to provide periodic updates as plans for the reservation system evolve. About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 395 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).

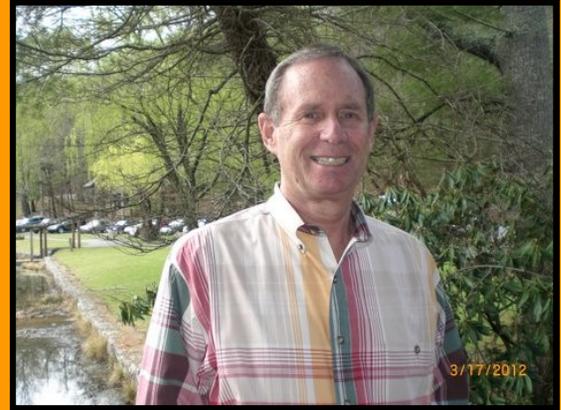


## BMTA State Rep: GA: Bob Ruby

If any of you readers have trail stories, gear advice, funny stories, or just a memorable trip you would like to see published in the Newsletter, please email them to .....

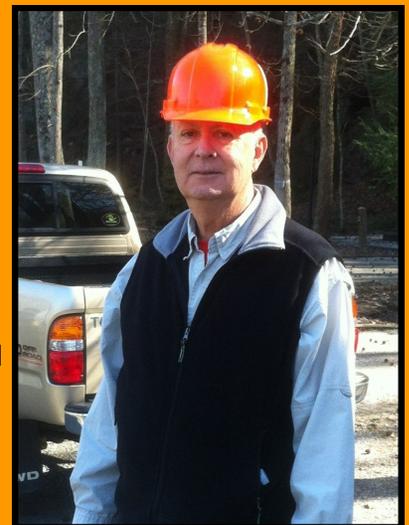
[Editor@bmta.org](mailto:Editor@bmta.org)

Bob spent his early years in CA and CO earning degrees in Engineering and Business. After his Army training, he had a 30-year career in sales & marketing for IBM. Bob has always enjoyed outdoor activities including surfing, sailing, snow skiing, running and triathlons. Besides the BMTA Board, Bob volunteers with the GATC, Chattahoochee River NRA and, Clark Howard's Consumer Action Center. Bob frequently gives BMT power point presentations at both the Hike Inn and various REI store locations. He and his wife Sarajane live in Sandy Springs, GA and enjoy traveling, especially to our National Parks.



## BMTA Membership: Vic Fredlund

Vic Fredlund retired from the US Army in 1986 and the US Department of Veterans Affairs in 2009 and immediately moved with his wife Paula to their long dreamed of retirement home in the mountains of Murphy, North Carolina. Vic enjoys hiking, kayaking and volunteering in various community activities now that life has slowed down. He's been tracking the BMTA membership records for the last year and a half and he's encouraged by the strength and dedication of the Association's membership. Vic and Paula also maintain Section 8a of the BMT in North Georgia.



**Editor's Note: Look for more BMTA Board Members to be featured in upcoming News-**

## Save More While Spending Less... By Gene Nix

In these days of skyrocketing unemployment, run-away gas prices, inflation, and our ailing economy, it's no wonder that people are starting to pinch pennies. I see my friends driving less. More people are postponing that big vacation. It has become common place to see notebooks full of coupons and discount ads being used at our supermarkets. Individuals and families have really tightened their spending and more people are looking for those deals that will save them money.

Recently, my family treated ourselves to a night at the movies. We first drove to Canton Georgia, about \$20.00 in gas. Our tickets were \$9.75 for adults and \$7.50 for children, a total of \$34.50. By the time we had gotten drinks, popcorn, candy, and a return trip for cotton candy, we had spent \$28.00 on refreshments. After the movies, we had promised the boys we would eat supper at Wendy's. \$18.50 later, we were on our way home. The total for our night of entertainment was \$101.00.....Wow !

Now, let's say I could show you how you and your family could spend less than 1 cent a day and be able to:

- Enjoy supervised nature walks and hikes
- Participate in organized strength and cardio workouts led by knowledgeable and motivated leaders as you maintain some of the most beautiful and historic wilderness areas in the world
- Attend meetings and classes covering topics that range from wilderness first aid to National Forest Legislation to proper use of a Pulaski
- Make new friends from every walk of life that enjoy nature, hiking, our wilderness areas, and love protecting it
- Become part of a group that is modeled after the founder of the Appalachian Trail
- Be entrusted with a portion of the Benton MacKaye Trail and be able to call it "Yours to Take Care Of", as you become the caretaker to clear and maintain it so others and yourself can enjoy its beauty
- Eat some of the best food ever after a day of trail maintenance (or some of the worst.....if you're eating what you packed, as you sit on a windy ridge in the Cohutta Wilderness)

Would you do it? Who wouldn't. . . . .



My time as a member of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association has been one of the best decisions of my life. My wife, children, and I have enjoyed cookouts and fellowship with other members in some of the most beautiful areas in the Southeast. I have attended informational seminars and classes taught by renowned experts in the field of wilderness and national forest preservation. I have been given a section of this magnificent trail that my family gets to maintain. I have enjoyed day hikes on the trail which have been led by knowledgeable members that not only know each and every wild flower and animal we encounter, but also have the intuition to get us back to our cars at the end of the day. I have made new friends that I actually know by name and hike and meet with on a regular basis. I have been able to serve on the Board of Directors and actively take a part in this national organization. Let's just say, I have gotten my money's worth.

For those reading and interested in becoming a part of this great trail organization, you can log onto: [www.bmta.org](http://www.bmta.org). You can also log in and get a wealth of information I was unable to cover in this one page article. Everything you need is on our web site. Joining is easy. You can join online or print a membership form and mail to the association.

You can even email me with questions, at [editor@bmta.org](mailto:editor@bmta.org). Ask for Gene . . . . .



One of the blessings of wilderness life is that it shows us how few things we need in order to be perfectly happy.

HORACE  
KEPHART

## The Pocket Wrench.....

By Rick Harris.....[The Top Saw Pocket Wrench](#)

The Pocket Wrench is a hand tool that has 8 tools in it to allow the user to work on a chainsaw in the field. The tool easily fits in your pocket (4 ½" long) and contains a large screwdriver for bar adjustment, a T27 Torx for all bolts on a Stihl chainsaw, a small screwdriver (for fuel and bar oil adjustment), a 4mm Allen Wrench (for work on Echo and Husqvarna saws), and has a 13mm (1/2") socket that will fit a bar nut on a half or full wrap handle Husqvarna saw. The other end of the tool has a 19mm deep socket that is a reversible 16mm socket for the spark plug on all saws and a bar nut on a Stihl saw. It comes with a nylon sheath so you can hang it on your belt and take it with you. Additionally it can be used as a file handle, there is a set of holes in the socket for a chainsaw file to be placed. All tools are easily replaceable. Patent Pending.



See.....<http://www.buytopsaw.com/>

## Counting of the Bears.....

By Rick Harris

Algonquin Provincial Park is a provincial park located between Georgian Bay and the Ottawa River in Central Ontario, Canada. The park is approximately 7653 square kilometers in size which is about the size of the state of Delaware. Algonquin is known for its canoeing, hiking, and its wildlife research. One amusing research activity that occurs each winter is the job of bear counting. Each bear that has been tagged must be found, examined, and thus, counted. I hope you enjoy the video which highlights the research team responsible for....."The Counting of the Bears."

**Click on the bear to begin the video....  
(Takes A Few Seconds to Start)**



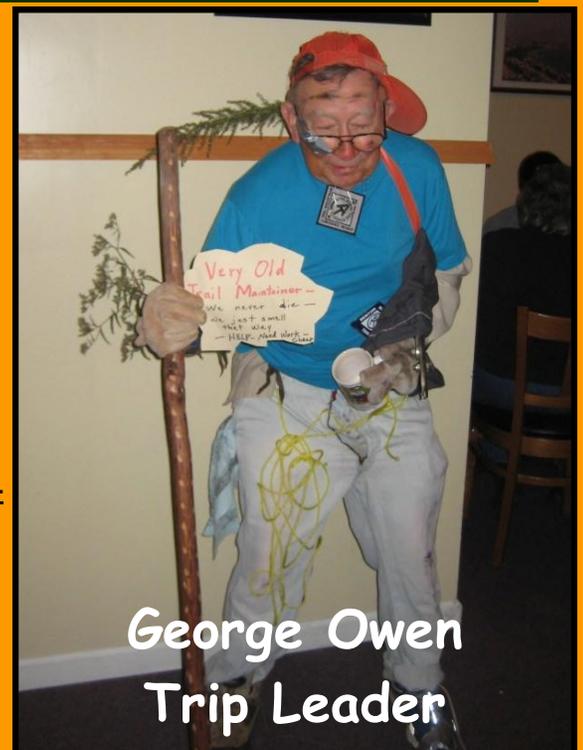
# BMTA Welcomes New Members

Collin Chambers	Ellijay, GA
Andrew Brown	Atlanta, GA
Steve Davis	Villa Rica, GA
James Williams	Lewes, DE
Hubert Wieland	Marietta, GA
Holly Doe	Atlanta, GA
Glen Ridley	Roswell, GA
Jim Huggins	Cocoa, FL
Cheer Shepard	Ellijay, GA
Ray Canaan	Winder, GA
Gloria Canaan	Winder, GA
Rebecca Levings	McDonald, TN
Brendan Levings	McDonald, TN



## Georgia Work Trip, April 14

Georgia Work Trip, April 14: We will continue work on a trail relocation near No Name Gap on Section 2. Two switchback sections have been completed and now the long third one to the summit in underway. Meet at the Village Restaurant in Blue Ridge at 8:00 AM or meet at the Three Forks trailhead at 9:15 AM. (Note: Trail-head meeting time is 15 minutes later than November.) The trip leader is Founding Father George Owen [706-374-4716](tel:706-374-4716) (home) or [706-897-3366](tel:706-897-3366) (cell).



George Owen  
Trip Leader

## Congratulations To Ken and Phyllis

As March 17th dawned, friends and relatives of Ken Jones and Phyllis Loman made their way to Vogel State Park in Northern Georgia for Ken and Phyllis' Wedding Ceremony. Although the morning was rainy, the clouds broke and by the time of the ceremony, a glorious blue sky filled the area. In the gorgeous pavilion at the Park, with Blood Mountain as a backdrop, the couple



exchanged vows before a crowd of over one hundred well-wishers. With Darcy Douglas providing music for the entire service, one of the high-points was when Ken and Phyllis sang a favorite song in front of the crowd, a real act of love (and courage!) Accompanied by the honking of the resident Canadian geese, who chimed in, not always on cue nor on key, but still adding a very ethereal element to the service. After the conclusion, everyone joined in great refreshments and camaraderie before the couple headed off, eventually to honeymoon in Hawaii. As a mark of the respect for Ken in the hiking community, I counted at least seven BMTA Presidents, plus folks from the US Forest Service, Back Country Horsemen and Radio Amateurs. We all wish both Ken and Phyllis all our best for a great and long future.



Dick Evans and the BMTA Family.....

## Mystery Solved - Owner Found

**By Ralph Heller**

I would like to report a recent incident that occurred as a result of an input to the Contact Us Page of our web site. I responded to an inquiry from a person, not a BMTA member, who had found a camera at the end of Weaver Creek Road, where the BMT comes down from Scroggins knob. This person, who lives nearby,



happened to be walking on the BMT, spotted the camera on the ground, and inquired if any BMTA member had lost a camera. I called the phone number given on the email and stated that I did not know of anyone who had lost a camera, but, maybe, if I saw a few pictures, I might recognize some folks in the photos. So, two photos were emailed to me. One of the pictures showed a side view of a gentleman attending a meeting in a classroom setting with someone up front giving a presentation. I thought I recognized the seated person, Carlos Martel, one of our members and also a member of the North Georgia Back Country Horsemen. I did not recognize the two folks sitting along a trail in the second picture. The pictures were sent to Carlos and he confirmed that he was in the first picture. The picture was taken during the Co-Trails meeting at Unicoi State Park, and he was pretty sure the folks in the second picture were there also. He also thought they were members of Forest Watch. The picture was sent to Forest Watch which confirmed that the couple was indeed mem-



bers. These folks were then contacted. The camera was theirs, but they did not even know it was lost until they checked. They contacted the person who placed the inquiry on our web site and soon owners and camera were reunited. Thanks to everyone who made this successful detective work possible. And, this is another example of our very useful Contact Us Page.