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- 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



A Hikers ... 12 Days Of Christmas ...

On the First Day of Christmas my true love gave to me; a speripen in a nalgene.



On the Second Day of Christmas my true love gave to me; two trekking poles and a sepripen in a nalgene.

On the Third Day of Christmas my true love gave to me; three Platypuses, two Trekking Poles, and a sepripen in a nalgene.



On the Fourth Day of Christmas my true love gave to me; four pair of socks, three platypuses, two trekking poles, and a sepripen in a nalgene.



BMTA Headquarters

On the Fifth Day of Christmas my true love gave to me; five miles to go....four pair of socks, three platypuses, two trekking poles, and a sepripen in a nalgene.



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On the Sixth Day of Christmas my true love gave to me; six feet of ducktape, five miles to go.....four pair of socks, three platypuses, two trekking poles, and a sepriPen in a nalene.

On the Seventh Day of Christmas my true love gave to me; seven hikers singing, six feet of duck tape, five miles to go.....four pair of socks, three platypuses, two trekking poles, and a sepriPen in a nalgene.



On the Eighth Day of Christmas my true love gave to me; eight firewood bundles, seven hikers singing, six feet of duck tape, five miles to go.....four pair of socks, three platypuses, two trekking poles, and a sepriPen in a nalgene.

On the Ninth Day of Christmas my true love gave to me; nine sparks a sparking, eight firewood bundles, seven hikers singing, six feet of duck tape, five miles to go.....four pair of socks, three platypuses, two trekking poles, and a sepriPen in a nalgene.



On the Tenth Day of Christmas my true love gave to me; ten REI shirts, nine sparks a sparking, eight firewood bundles, seven hikers singing, six feet of duck tape, five miles to go.....four pair of socks, three platypuses, two trekking poles, and a sepriPen in a nalgene.

On the Eleventh Day of Christmas my true love gave to me; eleven sips of Baileys, ten REI shirts, nine sparks a sparking, eight firewood bundles, seven hikers singing, six feet of duck tape, five miles to go.....four pair of socks, three platypuses, two trekking poles, and a sepriPen in a nalgene.



On the Twelfth Day of Christmas my true love gave to me; twelve ibuprofen, eleven sips of Baileys, ten REI shirts, nine sparks a sparking, eight firewood bundles, seven hikers singing, six feet of duck tape, five miles to go.....four pair of socks, three platypuses, two trekking poles, and a sepriPen in a nalgene.

Complements of Trail Dames ... A Hiking Club For Women of a Curvy Nature

Trail Dames: <http://www.traildames.com/georgia.html>

Presidents Message ...

I hope you all had an enjoyable Holiday Season and wish you all the best for 2014. A hearty thank you goes out to all who made time in 2013 to maintain trail, lead a hike, serve on the board, man a publicity booth, fill merchandise orders, dispense trail advice, or perform any of the other myriad tasks that preserve, promote, and protect the Benton MacKaye Trail. The efforts of many make the burden light. Thank you also to all who have renewed your memberships for 2014. Your continued support says you value a well maintained trail that offers entry into and passage through some of the nation's premier forest lands.



It is with great sadness that I report the passing of Betty Petty. Betty was involved in a tragic automobile accident on December 18, 2013 near Ooltewah, Tennessee. Betty served as president of the BMTA in 2007 and 2008. An article is in the works for a future Newsletter to pay a more complete and fitting tribute to her life and work. She will be dearly missed by all who know her.

September 3, 2014 will mark the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. It is anticipated that there will be several events around the south to commemorate the passage of the Act and the subsequent protection of millions of acres of federal lands from development and exploitation. We will provide information on these events as it becomes available. Please consider volunteering to lead or assist a presence by the BMTA at one or more of these.

I am reaching out to the several National Forests through which the BMT passes to find out about resource training dates and locations for 2014. This information will be posted on the Activities Page of the BMTA web site. Most of the training takes place on Saturdays and requires advance registration. Please be proactive in seeking out opportunities to get new or renewed certification for first aid and saw operations.

The first board meeting for 2014 is scheduled for 9:00 AM, Saturday January fourth. It will take place at the offices of the Fannin County Chamber of Commerce and should conclude by noon or shortly thereafter. Board meetings are open to the membership but those wishing to bring business before the board are requested to submit such ahead of time to be considered for inclusion in the agenda.

Happy New Year! I hope to see you on the trail soon.

David

UPCOMING HIKES ... by Ralph Heller - Hiking Director

I did not get any response from anyone regarding contacting me if you were interested in hikes with short notice due to unpredictable weather long term in the winter months. So for January I have decided to schedule a hike on Saturday **January 18**, weather permitting. We will be hiking out FS Road 338 which goes from Stanley Gap south by Rich Mountain. This road is usually closed to vehicular traffic except during deer hunting season which will be over by the 18th. Since roads and driving conditions can be a problem that time of year I have picked a nearby location which is easily accessible. There should be some good views of the Rich Mountain Wilderness, which the road borders. Since we will be at a high elevation for mountains in this area, we might also get to see some snow. The hike will be about 6 miles in and out. Contact me to sign up for the hike and get meeting location in the Cherry Log area and meeting time. Email rshbmta@gmail.com or Phone 770-235-9760

Hike Inn AT Amicalola Reserved ... 10 Rooms Still Available

We are already getting a good response for the trip to the Hike Inn on Wed., **March 12**. Our folks have already booked half the rooms. As mentioned last month, this is always a popular destination, so get your reservations in before all the rooms are gone. **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 contact me to let me know that you are signed up so I can keep track of how many rooms are reserved. Contact info is in the paragraph above.** There is a 50% discount which comes to about \$86 for a room for two with dinner and breakfast included. This is a great deal!



TN/NC Worktrip... December 28 ... Hurry >>> "You Can Still Make it" Georgia Crews Are Invited

Just a reminder to you all that we have a work trip coming up [this Saturday, Dec 28](#). Info below. You can go to <http://www.meetup.com/Cherokee-Hiking-Club-of-Southeast-Tennessee/events/155437952/> to sign up or send me an email or call me. We most likely will not do Crew 1, since this is Betty Petty's section, and as you all probably know, she was killed in an auto accident in Ooltewah on I-75 [last Wednesday](#). A tractor trailer crossed the median and smashed into her car. We thus plan a special work trip to cover her section, inviting the GA folks to join us as well.

The TN/NC BMTA Work Trip for December will be on [Saturday](#), Dec 28, the [Saturday](#) after Christmas. This will be a great opportunity to get away from all that food and all those kids/grandkids and get out in the wilds for some exercise. Remember, exercise burns calories, something we all will have an excess of by [Dec 28](#). Maybe even bring along your kids if you have not had enough of them.

Here are the plans:

Saturday, [Dec 28](#), 9 AM: Meet behind the Cherokee Skyway Visitor Center in Tellico Plains for assignments and setting up shuttles. There will be three crews as follows:

Crew 1: Travel to the top of the Sugar Mtn crossing (mile 149.0) after leaving a vehicle at the Fish Hatchery along Tellico River Road. Brush and log out with chainsaw this non-wilderness section from the top to the bottom (2.4 miles)

Crew 2: Travel to the BMT crossing on TN68 south of Tellico Plains (mile 123.9). Go uphill to the motorcycle trail intersection (about 0.5 miles) logging and brushing out this section and repainting the blazes. Then go back to TN68 and head down toward Coker Creek bridge, brushing and logging out. the blazes going down toward Coker Creek from TN68 are in good shape. When this crew meets the crew coming up from Coker Creek, either exit back to TN68 or continue on down to Coker Creek for a ride back to their cars supplied by the Coker Creek .

Crew3: Travel to the Coker Creek Crossing down by the Hiwassee River (mile 119.9). Head uphill logging and brushing out till they meet the crew coming down from above. Return to your cars at Coker Creek crossing. This crew may need to shuttle crew #2 back to their cars at TN68. Blazes on this section are in good shape. Afterwards, we all can consider a meal at the new restaurant near Coker Creek or just head home. We need chain saw folks for all three crews. So, if you are certified, please join us.

Please let me know if you can join us by Friday [Dec 27](#) at 7 PM. I will send out a reminder and the weather forecast a few days in advance, maybe on Christmas Day.

Richard Harris
423-253-6358 Home
513-260-1184 Cell HarrisRi@aol.com

Fall Branch Falls Hemlock Treatment By Ralph Heller

I want to thank Donna Shearer and Save Georgia's Hemlocks volunteers for treating Hemlock trees along the BMT, from Weaver Creek Road up to Fall Branch



Save Georgia's Hemlocks

Falls. On **Saturday**, Nov. 2, the day of our Annual Meeting, 16 folks, including Jim Wentworth, Wildlife Biologist for the Blue Ridge Ranger District, treated over 156 trees. Save Georgia's Hemlock's is a great organization which does a real service helping to preserve our forests. If you have some spare time, consider volunteering for some of their activities. Go to www.savegeorgiashemlocks.org.

January 11 Georgia Work Trip ...



--- We will work west (trail-north) from Hudson Gap toward McKenny Gap, on beautiful, isolated Section Eight. We will refresh water diversions and side-hilling, as well as clearing any remaining summer growth. Plenty of activity to keep warm! The winter views toward Rich Mountain Wilderness are top-drawer. Don't miss it!

We meet for breakfast at the L&A Corner (store&restaurant) across from the Pink Pig in Cherrylog at 8AM. Or meet at the Bushy Head Gap trailhead at 9:00 AM.

First-timers are most welcome! For what to expect, what to wear, what to bring, go to

<http://www.bmta.org/pdfs/WorktripsWhatToExpect-revSep2011.pdf>

Trip leader is Barry Allen (770-294-7384)

February 8 Georgia Work Trip ...



February 8 - Georgia Work Trip – We will work on Section 7c on the Sisson property, mostly refreshing side-hilling and installing water diversions. We meet at the Village Restaurant in Blue Ridge at 8:00AM. The “trailhead” meeting time/place is 8:45 at Sisson Pavilion near the original BMTA World Headquarters. (Cross the covered bridge and take the first right, then continue along the lake to the parking area. Trip leader is Tom Keene, [770-548-4935](tel:770-548-4935)).

Congratulations to Bill Hodge ...

SAWS Director Bill Hodge was announced as the recipient of the 2013 Bob Marshall Award as an Individual Champion of Wilderness Stewardship. The recipient is nominated and selected by the United States Forest Service in conjunction with the International Journal of Wilderness. Upon announcing Hodge's selection, the Forest Service stated: *"Mr. Hodge is being recognized for his stewardship of wilderness at the regional and national levels. Mr. Hodge's accomplishments include the development of an annual wilderness training program known as the Wilderness Skills Institute, providing field presence in wildernesses in the southern Appalachians through a SAWS Wilderness Ranger program, and assisting the Cherokee, Chattahoochee-Oconee and North Carolina National Forests in working on the Chief's 10 Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge. Bill has served on the board of the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance (NWSA) and led the effort to host the 2012 NWSA conference in North Carolina. Bill is passionate about growing the next generation of wilderness stewards. This is exemplified in his work to provide underserved youth exposure to wilderness for life changing experiences and stewardship efforts. His work has had life-long impacts to the resources and people and exemplifies the true meaning of being a "wilderness steward."*



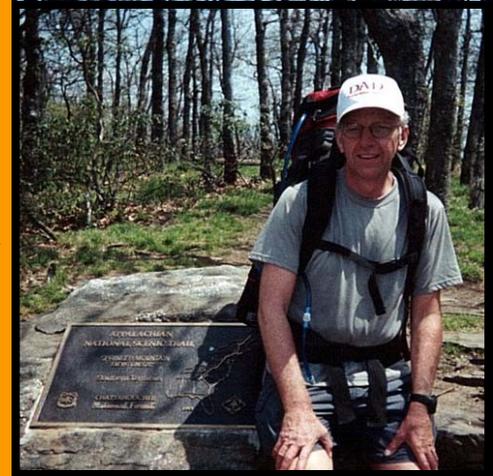
Bill is not only a member of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association but also serves on our Board of Directors as the Tennessee and North Carolina Maintenance Director.

Blaze and Mssnglnk ... by Gene Nix

Last month, the newsletter covered three of our members that had thru-hiked the Appalachian Trail. Those members were Larry Dumas, Hank Baudet, and Collin Chambers.

This month, we would like to cover two more Appalachian Trail Thru-Hikers, Gary Monk and Regina Reiter. Both are avid hikers and long time members of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association.

Gary is a retired airline pilot who thru-hiked the AT in the summer of 2002. He is a member of the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club, Benton MacKaye Trail Association and the ATC. He tries to be active in both groups and enjoys them very much. During the winter he tries to do an overnight trip once a month. When he is getting in shape for a longer hike Gary will do two or three day hikes with a 38 pound pack two or three times a week. Gary learned to fly in the Marine Corps and flew helicopters in Viet Nam. Gary says from cockpit to trail would be quite a transition: from six miles a minute and seven miles up to ten miles a day over the mountain trails.



Regina Reiter thru-hiked the AT in 2007. She was a south bounder and considered this hike her well earned sabbatical after 25 fulfilling years of being a homeschooling mom. Regina's youngest of three sons just completed his schooling and she was itching to hike! She had always wanted to hike the AT since she set foot on it in the Spring of 2003. She adopted a .6 mile section of the AT to maintain in Georgia and has joined the GATC for work trips, finding both endeavors fun and satisfying. None of Regina's family wanted to do a through hike, so she was solo and would be meeting her companions on the trail. Regina says, "hiking feels like normal life! Raising kids and creating jobs in the city are "wilderness".



If any other BMTA member has completed a thru hike of the Appalachian Trail, please let me know. You can reach me by emailing to: editor@bmta.org.



2013 Year End Membership Report



**P. O. Box 6
Cherry Log, GA 30522**

Web Site : www.bmta.org
Email : President@BMTA.org

2013 Year End Membership Report

The final figures for 2013 for Memberships by Category are below:

Individual	112
Family	80
Senior/Student	41
Life	53
Corporate	4
Total	290 Memberships. Given that each Family is at least 2 persons, likely 2.5, this gives a total of about 410 folks who identify themselves as Members.

As comparison, from previous reports: (not all were December Reports)

2006	-	226
2007	-	250
2008	-	232
2009	-	206
2010	-	275
2011	-	265
2012	-	269
2013	-	290

In January, all non-renewing Members will get a personalized email reminding them to renew. In February, I will prepare a list of member names and phone numbers and try to distribute them to Board Members for personal contact.

Dick

New & Renewing Members November 13-December 22



New & Renewing Members - November 13 - December 22

Charles	Birdsong	Pulaski	TN
James	Covington	Cartersville	GA
Steve	Davis	Carrollton	GA
Larry E.	Dumas	Mineral Bluff	GA
Richard and Margaret	Evans	Robbinsville	NC
Ralph S. & Marge	Heller	Cherry Log	GA
John	Kennedy	Kennesaw	GA
David	Martin	Douglasville	GA
Arthur	Meyer	Ellijay	GA
Jeff	Milway	Alpharetta	GA
Jim & Noor	Moody	Ellijay	GA
Kathy	Overstreet	Ellijay	GA
David	Paddock	Marietta	GA
Martina	Palmour	Dahlonega	GA
Nancy	Sauls	Ellijay	GA
Kevin	Sedgwick	Beech Mountain	NC
Clare	Sullivan	Atlanta	GA
William	Tally	Douglasville	GA
Gilbert	Treadwell	Blue Ridge	GA
Murrah	Watson	Cohutta	GA
Mark & Kathy	Yost	Morganton	GA

Our Worktrip With George Clooney

Our Worktrip with George Clooney

By Tom Keene

The second Saturday of every month is BMTA-Georgia worktrip day – wherever you are, whatever you are doing. Last month, I had a trip to Italy in connection with Kennesaw State's study abroad program there. Saturday, November 9th, Jane and I found ourselves in southern Italy on the island of Capri.



Yes, life is hard.

We discovered that the west coast of the small island, a wall of jagged limestone cliffs and inlets, had a hiking trail. The trail connects the string of fortifications built through the centuries to ward off people up to no good: pirates, the Arabs, and, of course, the English.



Il Sentiero dei Fortini (The Footpath of Fortresses) is a rugged, spectacular -- and sometimes a little scary -- four hour walk. It's a beautiful, well developed trail, sometimes tracking high atop bare, windblown cliffs, at other times dipping into coves full of sub-tropical vegetation.



Occasional ceramic signs discuss local flora and fauna and keep hikers on track at intersections.



Several times we turned a corner and found the next cliff or cove occupied by a spectacular villa. We felt sure George Clooney must own a couple of them – or at least visit from time to time between film shoots and martini parties. Jane insisted that we stop for lunch at a spot with a good view of one such villa, hoping that Clooney would appear for desert.



Alas, no George.