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BMTA Officers 2015-2016

President:	Bob Ruby
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Secretary:	Joy Forehand
Treasurer:	Margaret Evans
GA M/C:	Barry Allen
TN/NC M/C:	Ken Jones
Smokies Coord:	Dick Evans
Hiking Director:	Mike Pilvinsky
Membership/Store:	Ken Cissna
Publicity:	Marcia Lehman Marge Heller
Conservation:	Peter Busscher
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Newsletter:	Kathy Williams
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State Rep TN/NC:	Rick Harris



BMTA Headquarters

Benton MacKaye Trail Association



VOLUME 33, ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2016

President's Column February 2016 by Bob Ruby

BMTA now on YahooGroups

BMTA has established a new communications vehicle for members and affiliates using YahooGroups listserv. This will allow interested members to subscribe their preferred email accounts to receive announcements related to BMTA and the BMT. The email account does not have to be a Yahoo account, e.g., you can subscribe using your Gmail or other account. It is under your control and is flexible:

- You can stop receiving emails at any time.
- You can receive emails one at a time or you can ask for a Daily Digest with messages delivered in batches of 15 or daily, whichever comes sooner.
- You can ask that no emails be sent, but still read them on the web when desired.

We are doing this because BMTA has had a dilemma in communicating with its members. The newsletter only comes out once a month. Because not everyone wants to hear about BMTA more than once a month, we have been reluctant to send out all-member email "blasts." Part of this communications gap has been filled with ad hoc email lists, e.g., trail maintainers or monthly hikers. Now we can reserve "blasts" for important announcements affecting virtually all members, while still communicating items of interest on a timely basis.

You can even broadcast emails to all subscribers, unless your authorization has been restricted. GATC has been using this system for years, and it has not been abused. I probably receive one or two emails a week: sometimes passing on announcements from the Forest Service, sometimes announcing activities, sometimes sharing press coverage, sometimes someone looking for a companion on a work project or backpack.

I encourage everyone interested in keeping up with BMTA to try subscribing. There may be some overlap with our Facebook page, but I think of FB as for anyone interested in the BMT, and YahooGroups for members and affiliates connected with BMTA. I'm sure our usage patterns will evolve over time.

Here is how you ask to subscribe and use it:

To subscribe: From your email address to which you wish to receive BMTA broadcast messages, initiate a message to:

BMT-Trail-Association-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

It is not necessary to include any message in the body of this email. You will receive a confirmation indicating that you have joined the group.

To send a broadcast message: Compose your message and send it to:

BMT-Trail-Association@yahoogroups.com

(You may wonder why we didn't use BMTA@yahoogroups. It was already taken by the Music Teachers Association of Greater Baltimore.)

The Importance of Checking-out

As part of our new Volunteer Group Agreement we have been emphasizing the importance of Check-in and Check-out while performing trail maintenance activities, especially as individuals and small-groups. This has been a longstanding practice for our Cherokee National Forest volunteers where maintainers routinely check-in beforehand and check-out at the end of the day with their Ranger Districts, frequently by radio.

Historically it has received less emphasis in our other Forests where the Ranger Districts aren't prepared to routinely handle check-in/out by individuals and small groups, especially on weekends. BMTA strongly encourages its volunteers to check-in/out with the Forest Service, a BMTA maintenance leader or other responsible adult who knows where they are going and what to do if they don't check-out by the specified time.

The above guidance isn't new, but what I want to emphasize this month is the importance of checking-out with the designated person. We had a situation arise in which one of our maintenance leaders (who understood he was the designated person) didn't hear anything after the work day. He attempted to contact the missing volunteer and his family, but with no luck. In this case, all was well, but our leader spent a restless night until he could verify that the volunteer was safe. **PLEASE BE SURE TO CONTACT YOUR SAFETY PERSON AS EXPECTED AT THE END OF THE WORK TRIP.**

We are all learning to reliably implement these new procedures, and mistakes will happen, but please try to do it right for everyone's benefit. It will save the designated person and potential searchers from needless frustration, and it will mean that should someone really need help, people will aggressively provide it.

Emergency Contacts Lists

In reviewing the previous topic, I got this good advice from Steve Bayliss (BMTA section maintainer and former Conservation Director):

For every trip you take into the woods whether for trail maintenance or fun, it is advisable to create a travel plan and emergency contact list – one copy to carry with you, and one for your desired contact at home. I have attached my own emergency contact list, which I leave with my wife along with my immediate travel plan. This could certainly be improved upon, and expanded to include agencies in TN/NC.

Steve's list is a good one. He didn't realize that we had already created a list with much of the same information for the entire BMT. It also includes the Forest Service Personnel who should be notified ASAP in the event of an injury during volunteer work on Forest Service lands to ensure Workers' Comp protection. The **BMTA Emergency Contacts List** may be found at: www.bmta.org/MaintainersPage.htm.

You should also enter key emergency contacts into your cell phone. For those areas of the BMT where cell coverage is not available, we recommend that you consider acquiring a low-cost ham radio for emergency communications. The radio and an entry level ham license cost less than \$50, with no service fees. See the August newsletter for more information. Rick Harris can provide you with a set of loadable files for each section of the BMT providing the prestored channels to reach Forest Service and other emergency frequencies. Below is Steve's emergency list:

Pertinent BMTA Members:

Barry Allen Ga. Maintenance Director: bmtabarry_AT gmail.com
770-294-7384
Bob Ruby BMTA President: bmtabob AT gmail.com 404-252-8888
Ralph Heller: rshbmta AT gmail.com 770-235-9760

Forest Service Offices

Blue Ridge Ranger District Office
Andy Baker, District Ranger
(All sections of the BMT east of US76/5/515, sections 1-7a)
2042 Highway 515 West
Blairsville, GA 30512
Phone: 706 745-6928
Fax: 706 745-7494
Office Hours: Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Open
11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Closed
12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Open

Conasauga Ranger District Office
(all sections of the BMT West of US76/5/515, Sections 7b-10d)
Jeff Gardner - District Ranger
3941 Highway 76
Chatsworth, GA 30705
Phone: 706 695-6736
Fax: 706 695-1872
Office hours: Monday - Friday
8:00-12:00 open
12:00-1:00 closed
1:00-4:30 open

Sheriff's Offices:

Fannin County: BMT sections 1 - 6a, 8h - 10d
Fannin County Sheriff's Office
645 West 1st Street
Blue Ridge Ga 30513
(706) 632 - 2044

Gilmer County: BMT Sections 6b-8g
Gilmer County Georgia Sheriff's Office
1 Broad Street, Suite #103
Ellijay, Georgia 30540
phone: 706-635-4162

Hospital near the BMT in Tennessee

Copper Basin Medical Center
144 Medical Center Drive
Copperhill, TN 37317
Phone: 423-496-5511

Some Hospitals near the BMT in North Georgia:

Fannin Regional Hospital
2855 Old Highway 5
Blue Ridge, GA 30513
(706)632-3711

North Georgia Medical Center
1362 South Main Street
Ellijay, GA 30540-5410
(706) 276-4741

Chatuge Regional Hospital
110 South Main Street
Hiawassee, GA 30546
Phone: 706-896-2222

An Emergency vet near the BMT in North Georgia:

Mountain Emergency Animal Center in Blue Ridge
Mountain Emergency Animal Center is the only animal emergency hospital in the North Georgia/Tennessee/North Carolina Tri-State area that is open all night, all weekend, and all major holidays, with a full staff of veterinarians and technicians in the hospital at all times.

GPS Directions
2517 Appalachian Highway
Blue Ridge, GA 30513

Physical Location:
Mountain Emergency Animal Center
1163 Windy Ridge Rd
Blue Ridge, GA 30513
Phone: 706-632-7879

In Tennessee
Tellico Plains Animal Clinic
303 Saw Mill Rd #1, Tellico Plains, TN 37385
Phone: (423) 253-7050, open only on Mondays and Fridays

BRUSH CREEK TRAIL HIKE FEB 4 2016

By Clayton Webster

On February 4, 2016, five Over-the-Hill Hikers joined with five Benton MacKaye Trail Association members for a 6.7 mile hike on the Brush Creek Trail near the Ocoee Whitewater Center where the 1996 Olympic kayaking events were held. It was in the high 30s when we started the hike and probably reached the mid 40s before the hike was over. However we warmed up quickly as the hikers began shedding layers at each rest stop.



Our hike started at Boyd Gap Overlook which has been described as the prettiest view in Tennessee. This view looks over the Ocoee River valley into the Big Frog Wilderness.

Our trip required a shuttle, so we left one vehicle at our finish point and drove a couple of miles to Boyd Gap for our starting point. The view at Boyd Gap was truly fantastic. The early morning fog covered the high mountain tops in the distance. Our trip leader was Tom Sewell. The Over-the-Hill Hikers on the trip were Ed and Clare Sullivan, Suzy Downing, Chris Curtin, and Clayton Webster. This was an all new trail for Chris, Suzy, and Clayton, but Ed and Clare live in nearby Copper Hill so they have been here many times. This trail has great views that never disappoint.

The trail is also a mountain biking trail, but was in remarkably good shape. We encountered two bikers right near the end of the hike who were starting in the opposite direction that we had hiked. A man and his young son started out with us, but took a short two mile loop option. Those were the only people we saw all day.

The Brush Creek Trail is pretty level the entire distance with only minor elevation changes. What was so hard for us to believe is that just about 50 years ago this whole area was so devastated by the fumes from the nearby Copper Smelting Plant that there was not a single blade of grass, tree, or anything growing. Now the area is indistinguishable from an undisturbed forest. The rhododendrons, mountain laurel, native plants, and wildflowers that previously would have been growing here are back like they used to be. About the only clue to the ecological disaster is the lack of giant trees that we normally encounter in forested trails.



A couple of the blow downs that resulted from high winds the night before.

The trail was in great shape, but the night before winds of up to 50 MPH came through the area. We encountered several places on the trail that needed Ed Sullivan's trusty saw to enable us to get past the blow downs. In Ellijay, the big sign at Poole's Bar-b-Q had blown down. Later on we wondered how the mountain bikers did when they got to these spots. There was no option to go around it because it was so steep on both sides of the trail. Our lunch stop was on top of a ridge overlooking Ocoee Lake. At our lunch break on the trail Chris Curtin passed around some Apple Jerky she had made. Who knew there was apple jerky? It was really good. You just tore off a big bite from the roll and chewed on it!



Back : Ed Sullivan, Hank Baudet, and Joe Kelly. Front: Clare Sullivan, Suzy Downing, Tom Sewell, Chris Curtin, and Carolyn Sewell.

We had been seeing views of the lake off and on for a couple of miles. The waters are backed up by Power House Dam #3. The shoreline of the lake is completely undeveloped. There is only one primitive campground accessible by a dirt road that branches off from Forest Service Road 221 heading into the Big Frog Wilderness. Towering Big Frog Mountain stood out in the distance. Ed and Clare Sullivan said they can put their canoe in at their home in Copper Hill, paddle downstream to this lake, and be completely alone with the beautiful scenery. Few people are even aware there is access at all to the lake.

We were on the trail for 3.5 hours. After the hike and the shuttle to retrieve all the vehicles, we decided that we could not make it to Poole's in Ellijay in time for supper. We had read about Joe's BBQ in Blue Ridge. Trip Advisor has named it the best in the United States based on posted reviews. We found it to be very good. Nothing like a good hike to give you an appetite!



Nothing like good BBQ!

Appetites still strong we stopped by Walker's Fried Pies and BBQ on Hwy 52 in Ellijay.

They make eight different kinds of fried pies. Today's varieties consisted of peach, apple, cherry, and strawberry.

One of the best things about our hikes are the comraderie that we share not only on the trail but the wonderful "Eatin'" after!!



Clayton Webster and Chris Curtain with some of her honey and home-made apple juice!



Enjoying the great winter weather!!!

Hike Inn, Storms and All!!!

By Mike Pilvinsky, "A good leader blames his subordinates for their success and takes full credit for all their failures."

Twenty-one BMTA hikers were registered at the Hike-Inn for our annual winter over-night outing. Unfortunately three of the hikers had to cancel at the last moment, but 18 trudged the 5 miles thru wind and rain to arrive on Wednesday, February 24th. Our party included first time BMTA hikers Fran Thomas, Karen Dunkelberger, and Chuck Fletcher. It was also a joy to have Courtney Beach-O'Dell from Idaho with us.

We arrived at the Hike-Inn with plenty of time to dry out, warm up, and wind down. But soon we began to anticipate another wonderful family style dinner. Hiking in less than ideal conditions always seems to give you a good appetite. Dining at the Hike-Inn is the ultimate definition of "comfort food." After dinner we were entertained by BMTA President Bob Ruby who gave an exceptionally interesting and informative program about the BMTA.

The next morning we awoke not to find another amazing sunrise, but a snow covered landscape. Following the hearty breakfast we split up with about 1/3 of the hikers returning on the Hike-Inn trail, while the rest took the Hike-Inn Connector and then headed south on the AT Approach Trail back to Amicalola State Park. Along the way we encountered more than a dozen AT Thru-hikers beginning their 2000+ mile journey to Maine. We met hikers from Ohio, Santa Fe, Minnesota, Florida, Pennsylvania, Germany, Switzerland, New Jersey and other states I can't remember. The AT is already becoming busy and the heavy traffic causes one realize what a gift of solitude we have on the Benton MacKaye Trail.

I think 100 percent of our Hike-Inn group is looking forward to a return trip, although perhaps with a bit more favorable weather.



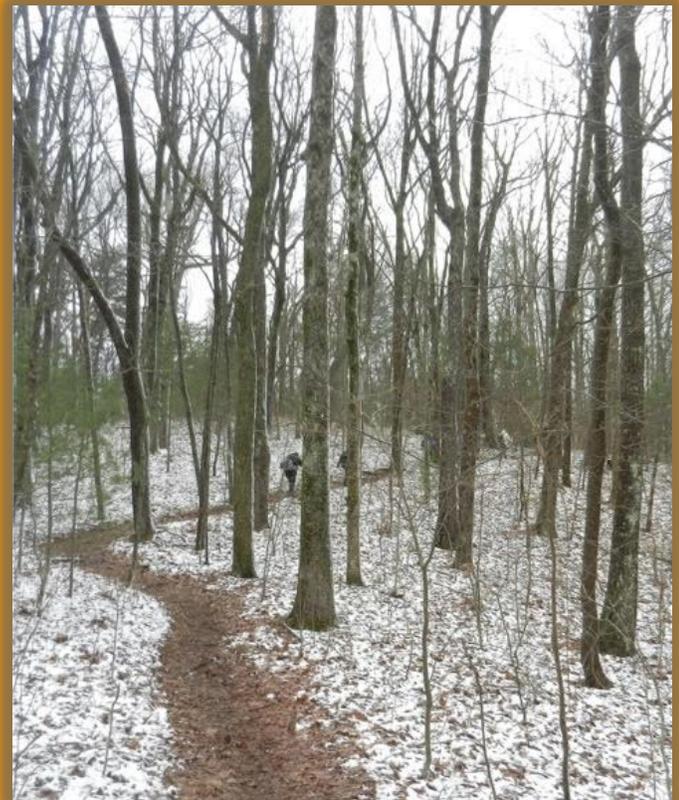
A hearty breakfast!!



Len Foote Hike Inn Snowglobe!



All packed up and ready for the return hike on the AT Approach Trail (in 31 degree weather) From Left: Courtney Beach-O'Dell, Patti O'Dell, Tom Johnson, Bob Ruby, Ken Cissna, Mike Pilvinsky, Roger LaChance, Carrie Cirrito, Everett Womack, Celine Melton & Chuck Fletcher. Bob Brown kneeling in foreground.



Work Trip Report for February, 2016

A Lesson on the Bill of Rights?

By Barry Allen

IT WAS COLD: ‘below freezing and windy’ cold; ‘do you really want to get out of this nice, warm truck’ cold; ‘shut up, stop talking, let’s start working’ cold. As we began our *Tour of the Trail* on this second Saturday in February, we assigned teams and tasks as follows:

- (1) Team Yost, responsible for tree and brush removal, both sides of the Swinging Bridge
- (2) Team Douglas, responsible for campsite dispersal and cleanup along 1.5 miles of trail
- (3) Team Allen, responsible for water diversion cleanout and replacement.

As we sent each team on their way, we left them with a final thought: **use this work time to think about how important the Constitution is to our association and mission.**

Readers are wondering “Just what in blazes does trail work have to do with understanding the Constitution?” To which I reply, **“The constitution was written by some awfully smart guys, and it is self-evident that trail building was one of their primary concerns.”** Just read on and you’ll begin to understand.

After passing over the Swinging Bridge, one of my team members swung a trail hoe into the frozen earth of a water bar. Several other members watched as the hoe bounced off tundra and caught a piece of ankle. After the laughing subsided and we made sure bone and tendons were more or less intact, I was reminded of the first Amendment-- **“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof or abridging the freedom of speech....”** as I listened to a sermon from the newly established *Church of the Swinging Bridge* damning the hazards of cold steel attached to hickory handle, I reminded the ankle sore preacher that perhaps we needed a non-denominational children’s service -- rather than the adult sermon now in progress. There was, after all, a young couple with two children and a dog approaching from the direction of the bridge. And we wouldn’t want to offend the dog. I’ve been known to recruit almost anything on two legs not wearing diapers, but I’ve not yet had much luck with animals. (Unless you count Phil Guhl; Debra tells me he’s almost house broke -- except for that one incident last week). Back to the First Amendment: as the couple with the children and dog passed out of ear shot, we began a discussion of freedom of speech vs public decency; this was a short conversation, as Ralph Heller was not present to explain public decency to any of us.

First amendment rights were reaffirmed later in the day as I observed Tom Keene leaning far out over the Swinging Bridge, pole saw in hand. I heard something that sounded much like prayer while Steve Bayliss balanced Tom by the belt buckle as Tom dropped one tree branch after another from bridge cables into the water below. *The Church of the Swinging Bridge* – certainly a possibility foreseen by the framers of the Constitution.

Lessons from the First Amendment continued throughout the day: one of my team members pointed out that he had the absolute right to peaceably assemble back at the truck. He also had the right to petition the government for a redress of grievances. Now I didn't quite understand what this meant, but he explained that he needed to redress in something warmer and grieve over the fact that he could be sitting in front of a fire at home rather than working on a cold bridge. I told him he could write a letter to the editor, and see if the press gave a damn. After all, Kathy is free to publish whatever she feels is of value to the reader, but I pointed out that his presence on such a cold, windy day brought into question his intelligence. I thought I presented a fairly cognizant argument, to which this team member responded with his own version of free speech. Where is Ralph when you need him?

Please help me extend our thanks to seventeen members and one guest – all of whom did an unbelievable job on Section 2. We worked a combined 100 hours, not including travel time. We cleaned and rebuilt 35 water bars and diversions, completely cleared the bridge and cables of tree and brush growth, removed years of leaf litter from the concrete footings, and cleaned or removed several campsites. Mike Kovitch joined our group as a guest, and did a remarkable job. Of course, I did receive a note from a family member saying the only thing he could do after Saturday was talk. He was not yet able to move. I made sure they understood the constitution only guarantees freedom of speech; movement is not part of the Bill of Rights. Those founding fathers sure knew what they were doing!

Members George Owen, Russ Johnson, Bob Cowdrick, Bob Ruby, Don Kenney, Phil and Debra Guhl, Mike Bartell, Brian Trinkle, Ed Sullivan, Steve and Connor Bayliss, Frank Forehand, Darcy Douglas and Tom Keene performed yeoman's work. Trip leader Mark Yost was outstanding!



Intrepid students of the Constitution with frozen smiles and numbed digits!

Next Month: Our *Tour of the Trail* continues on Section 3. And if I don't get good turnout, then the Bill of Rights lecture may continue **with the Second Amendment**. This amendment guarantees the right of individuals to keep and bear arms. My personal favorite is the double bit ax, but we have plenty of pulaskis, McLeods, trail hoes and saws for our members to bear. BTW, Darcy prefers a sweet little pink, folding number. I saw her pull this wicked killer from her backpack and attack a large deadfall last Saturday. Of course, I stopped to make sure she had a concealed carry permit for this honey of a saw. She keeps the permit attached to the middle finger of her left hand...

Letter to the Editor of Pain and Perseverance, Barry Allen and His Minions:

Glad to have joined all of you in your efforts. I cannot express how impressed I was with the level of member commitment and work ethic embraced by all on this sub-zero morning. I have gained a new respect and appreciation for what it takes to make and/or repair a water diversion on the BMT, thirty five of them by one member's count this day. If it appears that my fingers were shaking or stumbling as you read this email, I apologize but you see, although I am normally a fast typist, this given day I found my fingers so sore from grabbing that Pulaski axe, McLeod Fire rake or other vicious trail weapon, that my normally fast typing skills have been relegated to the all so familiar hunt and peck method. I found this technique also avoided any undo strain on my now rather sore forearms. In fact, it was with much effort that I crouched down slowly, so as not to overburden my aching leg muscles and ever so gingerly placed my derriere (the only part of me that is not hurting) on my chair before the computer. I am not sure that I will be able to ever stand again without some form of assistance, or at the very least, encouragement to rise and overcome. If anyone ever needed a suggestion where to send people required to do community service, I could quickly offer one up.

On a more serious note I cannot get over how far some of the members drove this given day to help out, even for such a worthy cause. I meekly confess that prior to leaving the warmth of my home, I checked the thermometer, the weather forecast and finally, my emails looking for what I knew would contain a work event cancellation. Alas, it was not there and since my car started in spite of my prayers for some sort of sudden catastrophic engine failure, I now had no choice but to join you. A great group of people, I might add. Throughout the morning, I kept waiting for that inevitable moan or groan from some fellow trail member I knew would surely come but, of course, it never materialized. Instead, everyone performed at a level that made the casual observer believe these maintainers must be looking for hidden trail treasure, perhaps just buried under the next root or rock. Surely, this had to be the underlying motivation that kept everyone moving forward (or should I say upward) and smiling the entire way. Having joined you for the first time, I have developed a new appreciation for trail maintenance and the people that perform it. Thanks for allowing me to join in. While sore, I'll admit I enjoyed the day on the trail with you and hope to see you on your next hunt for the buried trail treasure.

Regards,
Mike Kovitch
McCaysville, Ga.

Help Wanted

By Barry Allen

Benton MacKaye Trail Association, located in Cherry Log, seeks a part-time volunteer to perform monthly work trip photography.

The right candidate will be of questionable character, with a tendency to exaggerate the truth. No photographic experience required. Ability to tell the occasional off color joke is a plus. At least one knee replacement is preferred, but not required. Personal hygiene appreciated if car-pooling with maintenance director; may be overlooked if applicant has 4x4 vehicle.

This part-time position runs through post mortem, unless you find your own replacement. Work hours are 9:00 to 3:00, second Saturday of each month -- unless you need to leave early for the grandkids. Salary for this position is negotiable, as long as starting and ending point is \$0.00.

Incorporated in 1980, the Benton MacKaye Trail Association, is an all-volunteer non-profit organized to help build and maintain the nearly 300 mile route of the BMT along the Blue Ridge Mountains, beginning at Georgia's Springer Mountain.

As a part-time employee, you will not qualify for health insurance, dental, vision, or a 401k retirement plan. BMTA is an equal-opportunity employer as long as you bring the donuts.

If you wish to apply, please contact the BMTA newsletter editor or the maintenance director (or just show up at the next work event with the donuts.) You may call us at BR-549 if you have questions about the position. **YES, THIS IS A REAL POSITION, SO THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO VOLUNTEER!**

BMTA Presentation at Appalachian Trail Kickoff Amicalola Falls State Park, Dawsonville GA Friday March 4 - Sunday March 6

Mark your calendar for one of the premier events in the hiking world where the BMTA will be well represented with our President, Bob Ruby, giving a talk and PowerPoint Presentation on the BMT, Saturday, March 5, at 1pm. In addition, the BMTA display will be manned by members on Saturday & Sunday, March 5 & 6.

The "ATKO" (Appalachian Trail Kickoff) has been held annually for 15 years. It is a gathering of "AT" experts, vendors, hiking clubs, authors, the Appalachian Conservancy as well as newcomers and trail veterans. The goal is to "meet, greet and educate!" What a great way to welcome the spring hiking season!!

Come see us! Don't miss out!

BMTA MARCH WORK TRIP ANNOUNCEMENT

Section 3a, Ga 60 to Wallalah/Licklog Saddle

By Barry Allen

- ◆ **Where:** Section 3a
- ◆ **When:** Saturday, March 12, 2016, 9:00 AM
- ◆ **Meet:** Village Restaurant in Blue Ridge at 8:00 or GA 60 at Little Skeenah Creek, across from FS 816 at 9:00.
- ◆ **Plan for the Day:** Step replacement using 6x6 PT, work to divert water from trail at two seeps, misc tread work
- ◆ **What to bring:** minimum two liters of water, long pants, boots, gloves and snack or lunch for the day.
- ◆ **Contact:** Barry Allen at bmtabarry AT gmail.com or 770-294-7384

Please join the BMTA for our March work trip as we continue a series of work dates intended to show off our trail, month by month. In March, we'll work one of our more difficult sections – Section 3a, running 2.2 miles from Ga 60 to the gap between Wallalah and Licklog Mtns. This section of trail is well maintained by the Korean Alpine Club of Georgia. On Saturday the 12th, we will be moving several pressure treated timbers to the first major incline on the section and replacing 4-5 decayed step treads. We'll leave a few people to complete this task and walk about 1.5 miles of trail until we hit the first of two water seeps. The rest of our crew will work this area of trail to divert water. Along the path, we will also re-work one difficult switchback. **Please join us!**



Monthly Work Trip in Tennessee February 20

By Ken Jones

The monthly work trip in Tennessee was on Section 12b, just north of the Dry Pond Lead Trail intersection. This section contains a 0.2 mile long side hill trail portion that was constructed on a steep side slope. The type of soil and steep side slope combine to make trail tread maintenance a real challenge. Four trail volunteers, along with the Ocoee District Trails Technician, Drew McCarley, accepted the challenge and corrected all of the tread problems for this area. The weather failed to cooperate and produced light rain for most of the day. In spite of the bad conditions, the crew was able to restore 1000' of side hill tread to good condition. As we were working on the tread, a young trail runner passed through our freshly created mud trail. She had started her run at US 64 and came up the 4 mile long Dry Pond Lead Trail. She appreciated our efforts, as she continued her run to get in shape for the Thunder Rock 100 mile event that will be held in May. Volunteers braving the rain for this work trip were Clayton Pannell, Steve Cartwright, John Kalabus (the new section maintainer for this section), and Ken Jones. Thanks go out to these dedicated trail maintainers, and to Drew McCarley, for accomplishing a lot of work on a wet February day.



**BMT Thru Hiker “Davy Crockett” on the trail February 6 2016, 4 days out from his start at Springer Mountain
Best of luck “Davy”!!**

Bridge Rescue on Sisson Creek

By Ralph Heller



Marty Dominy supervising construction of bridge in 2011



Logs and debris jammed against bridge



More than one use for hip waders!



Finished product!!

As shown in the above picture, recent rains created a log/trash jam at the bridge on the BMT located on the creek just upstream from the railroad track in the Sisson Development. The bridge, faultlessly engineered by long time BMTA member Marty Dominy, withstood the onslaught of a huge amount of logs, stumps and trash washed down by torrents of water.

On January 19, Barry Allen, Ralph Heller and Jack Kennedy took on the task of clearing all of the debris that had washed up against the bridge, although Barry did all of the hard work. Barry, a trout fisherman, wore his hip waders into the creek. He then proceeded with his "water cooled" chainsaw to dissect every log into manageable pieces. Ralph and Jack, awe struck by Barry's fortitude helped by removing the heavy water-logged cut pieces from the stream bed.

The whole procedure took about 2.5 hours. An inspection of the bridge afterwards discovered absolutely no damage. The cleaned up area and water scoured stream bed now present a beautiful view of the small waterfall just upstream.

PHOTO CONTEST FOR NEW BMTA T-SHIRT

By BMTA T Shirt Committee

Brittany and David Durkin, BMTA corporate members and owners of Terra Outfitters in Blue Ridge are about to launch a new line of hiking shirts. They will soon have available BMT T-Shirts in wicking type material. In addition, Terra Outfitters plans to donate 20% of each shirt sold to the BMTA and Atayne (the manufacturer) will also donate 5% for a total of 25%.

This is a very generous offer, but in order to make this happen, we need photographs taken on the BMT to incorporate into the shirt's design.

Suggested images include: mountain views, waterfalls, tree on trail with BMT blaze.

And yes, **we need the pictures NOW!** Submit your best entry or entries (maximum 3 photos) in vector format (EPS or ai file type). Hi-res pictures ideally at least 3000 pixels tall.

Send photos, by **March 5th**, via e-mail to: nanahiker AT gmail.com

Winning photographer will have bragging rights when the new shirt is released (hopefully by end of April).



Brittany and David Durkin of Terra Outfitters in Blue Ridge
THANK YOU!!!!

It's Time to Renew!!!!

If you are a life member or joined or renewed within the last couple of months, you can ignore this message. Your membership is current. **Thank you!!!**

The rest of you: **It is time to renew.** As you know, memberships in BMTA are for an entire calendar year, so **everyone's membership ended on December 31.** You can pay via PayPal using your credit card or send a check to the BMTA. Either way, you start by clicking here: <http://www.bmta.org/Membership.php>

Your membership is tax deductible. Also, please consider adding a tax deductible donation to BMTA. As you know, BMTA has no paid staff, and all donations go to support the trail. Donations via check may be made using the printed membership form. Donations via credit card or PayPal can be made by clicking the "Donate" button located at the bottom left of the [bmta.org](http://www.bmta.org) home page. **Thanks for your support!**

Membership Counts! Members are given first consideration in the event a hike over fills.

Bob Ruby
President, BMTA

Ken Cissna (kcissna AT usf.edu)
Membership Director and Store Manager, BMTA



WOW What Happened?! Not All That Much.

By Kathy Williams



Was it the floods?!

Was it the snow?!

Someone scrounging
firewood?!

Where are the beams to our
covered bridge?!

No-Just too much love by a
passing vehicle!

Upcoming Hikes

By Mike Pilvinsky Hiking Director

- ◆ **Wed., March 9** - Longtime member, Hank Baudet is leading an Easy Trek hike on the Old Copper Road, with an option to continue on to the Rhododendron Trail along the Ocoee. It is always fun hiking with Hank as he does his “stand-up” routine and regales you with interesting facts and stories along the way. Some of his stories might actually be true! For time and meet-up information, call Hank at [\(706\) 946-4318](tel:7069464318).
- ◆ **Fri., March 11** - Backpacking clinic, **6:30pm**, at the North Georgia Mountain Outfitters, located on Hwy 515, just 4 miles North of Ellijay. AT section hiker Travis Crouch and his international hiker wife Shirley will conduct the clinic. This clinic is designed for the first time backpacker as well as those who would like to give their children or grandchildren the information needed for their first backpacking experience. This will help prepare you for the backpacking hike on March 18. Please call their store to reserve a spot in the clinic. [\(706\) 698-4453](tel:7066984453)
- ◆ **Fri., March 18** - after meeting in Ellijay, backpackers will convoy to the Amadahy Trail near Woodring Branch at Carter's Lake. It is a very easy trail along the banks of the Lake for 2.5 miles to the campground. The campground has gravel tent pads, picnic tables, charcoal grills, and two privies. Experienced backpackers can also use this as a shakedown before longer treks this season. It is also a perfect way to introduce your children or grandchildren to backpacking. It will be one overnight with a second night option. If you can't make it on Friday, we will repeat the hike on Saturday. Call Mike Pilvinsky for info: [\(706\) 273-2086](tel:7062732086)
- ◆ **Wed., March 23** - Hike the Bald River Trail. Moderate 9 mile trail in TN will have a 10am meet up time to allow most Georgians to participate without leaving home before sunrise! We will hike past the 100 ft Bald River Falls and several other lesser falls to the last major falls about 4 1/2 miles up the trail, eat lunch, then return the way we came in. There is one side creek crossing which should be easy unless lots of rain in the day or two before the hike. Fairly gentle grades. Stunningly beautiful scenery in this Wilderness of the Cherokee National Forest! Contact Hike Leaders Rick & Brenda Harris at [\(423\) 253-6358](tel:4232536358)

* Note some of these hikes are considerable driving distances.
Please contribute gas money to your driver when you carpool. Thank You!

Swinging Bridge Road Closures

The USFS is conducting closures of Forest Service Road 816 off Hwy 60 that leads to the popular swinging bridge over the Toccoa River. The closures are part of a logging operation in the area. For more information, contact the Chattahoochee National Forest in Blue Ridge (706) 745-6928. Although the road is closed during logging operations, the bridge and trails remain open.

Parking Solution for Highway 515/US76 Crossing Location

Hikers on the section of the BMT that crosses Highway 515/US 76 between Ellijay and Blue Ridge, no longer have to park next to the highway or along County Road 158 on the east side of the highway. Julie Jabaley, Executive Director of the Craddock Center, has given permission for hikers to use the parking lot next to the Center which is located on the hill just west of the highway. Look for the Craddock Center sign and take the road up the hill. The trail passes just behind the Center. Backpackers may also park their cars

The deadline for articles for the March Newsletter is Wednesday March 23, 2016