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BMTA Officers 2017-2018

President:	Tom Keene
Vice President:	George Owen
Secretary:	Joy Forehand
Treasurer:	Margaret Meadows
GA M/C:	Barry Allen
TN/NC M/C:	Vacant
Smokies Coord:	Larry Dumas
Hiking Director:	Ken Cissna
Store:	Ken Cissna
Membership:	Darcy Douglas
Publicity:	Jeff DePaola
Conservation:	Dave Ricker
Past President:	Bob Ruby
Newsletter:	Kathy Williams
State Rep GA:	Bob Cowdrick
State Rep TN/NC:	Rick Harris



BMTA Headquarters



President's Column

CELEBRATION(s)!

COME ON!

And the Colin Fletcher bio...

I hope you will join us for two celebratory occasions this fall:

The Fall Branch Falls Reroute Grand Opening

Saturday 22 September – All Day



Barry's face says it all!!!
Photo courtesy of Mike Kovitch

The approach trail to Fall Branch Falls off Rock Creek Road in Gilmer County is perhaps the most used section of the BMT. As we have reported here over the last several months, a major reroute of the approach trail is now complete, a handsome information kiosk is in place, and very shortly the repairs on the viewing platform for the falls will be complete. So, the BMTA Publicity Committee is putting on a party!

On the morning of Saturday, September 22nd, with honored guests from the Forest Service and the Fannin and Gilmer Chambers of Commerce on hand, we will cut the ribbon officially opening the new trail to the falls. Our BMTA tent will be at the entrance to the trail from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM where our members will distribute literature and answer questions about hiking, trail maintenance and conservation. Everyone is invited to enjoy complimentary morning coffee and donuts, hot dogs and a hike to the falls. For more details, see the Publicity Committee's flier on page four and their article on page five.

Continued next page

BMTA Annual Meeting at Coker Creek Village, Coker Creek, TN- November 2-4

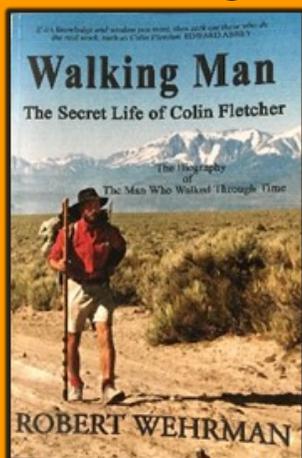
George Owen and the Annual Meeting Planning Committee are pulling together a super weekend of activities with headquarters at the beautiful Coker Creek Village.

The Village is located between Farner and Tellico Plains on Highway 68 in Tennessee, an easy drive from North Georgia.

The weekend will include hikes, bonfires and other activities, beginning Friday afternoon and continuing until Sunday after breakfast. You will not want to miss the annual all-members meeting on Saturday evening which will begin with a dinner and end with the presentation of awards like the maintainer t-shirts, the Volunteer of the Year and Maintainer of the Year. And much else.

For all the details, and how to register, see George's article on [page seven](#).

Walking Man: The Secret Life of Colin Fletcher by Robert Wehrman (2016)



For men of a certain age (and some women too) Colin Fletcher is “the father of modern backpacking,” the person whose books, especially *The Complete Walker* (1st ed. 1968), were both an inspiration and a practical guide to getting out and away from the pressures and complexities of modern life.

Of course a social phenomenon as widespread as the hiking and backpacking boom of the late 60's and 70's has many causes. In the late 1960's all kinds of folks were looking for ways to get away. (The *Whole Earth Catalogue* was also published in 1968!) As Robert Wehrman notes, Colin Fletcher despised his countercultural neighbors in Berkeley. Yet surely the widespread desire to disengage from the dominant culture of the day was a major reason Colin Fletcher's books sold so well and why the man himself became a cult hero. “Great” men and women almost always ride a wave they had little if any role in creating.

If, like many biographers, Wehrman credits his subject with more influence than he actually had, he certainly does not sugar-coat the deeply conflicted and often miserable human being that Fletcher was. A key reason Fletcher was so attracted to long solitary walks was that he could not stand being around other people except briefly, and on his own terms.

To be fair, Colin Fletcher's life provided ample reason for his neurotic and reclusive temperament.

Fletcher grew up in Wales during the difficult economic years between the two world wars. The depression struck Bangor, Wales hard. When Colin was five, his father left the family to go to America to find work and was not heard from again for 30 years. An only child living with his mother, Fletcher turned inward and remained so the rest of his life. During WWII he served as a commando and parachuted behind German lines in France, for months alternately disrupting German communications, dodging patrols, and sleeping in the rough – until the allies (finally) landed on Normandy. The young marine saw several close friends die and narrowly escaped death himself several times – experiences that haunted Fletcher the rest of his life. In the years that followed, Fletcher's two marriages ended swiftly and painfully. A third woman he met in California, and ever after considered the love of his life, left him and moved to New York while Fletcher was on the solo length-of-California hike that would become the basis for his first successful book.

I could go on...

Actually, recluse is not quite the right term for Colin Fletcher. He could be charming and amusing, and, when in the right mood, apparently made a delightful dinner guest. But he did not find it easy. After Fletcher became rich from book royalties he bought an isolated home outside Carmel, California. (Even then Carmel was home to the rich and famous – though Clint Eastwood was not yet mayor.) Fletcher’s nearest neighbor was almost a mile away. After a decade or so they became acquainted and Fletcher came over for an occasional dinner. The neighbor described the ritual to Wehrman: “Fletcher would call ahead about an hour before he was to arrive to confirm he was coming over soon; half an hour later he’d call to say he was leaving in a bit; in another ten minutes he’d call and ask if he could bring something. Then, just as he was about to walk out the door he would call and say he was on his way.”

Despite all the anxieties and bouts of depression, Fletcher was both highly resourceful and very productive. Some of the survival tactics he had to practice as a commando not only kept him alive in dicey moments on his walks, they would later appear in his books as tips for hikers. Writing did not come easily or quickly to him. His major books were all the product of many months of almost unbroken isolation and toil. Not infrequently over the years he worked himself into such a state of exhaustion he would collapse, bed-ridden for a month at a time.

To my mind Fletcher’s writing style in *Complete Walker* only rarely delights. His attempts at eloquence are often labored. We were fascinated above all, not by how Fletcher writes, but by what he writes about. We long to get away, just as Fletcher did in his solo walks. Along the way his camping tips and guides on backpacking gear keep fueling our hopes we could do the same. And over the decades thousands have done exactly that.

In an odd parallel, the same can be said of Robert Wehrman’s writing in this biography. At almost 600 pages the book goes on a bit, and the style is often klunky (a technical term!). But Wehrman has done his homework. He devoted massive time to Fletcher’s private papers – often just scraps of paper on which he scribbled notes and threw into a folder. As a result, *Walking Man* is full of fascinating inside information. As a longtime reader of academic historical works, I found Wehrman’s tendency to invent conversations and put them in the mouths of real people irritating, but I admit the technique helps keep the narrative moving.

Still, the main reason Wehrman’s book succeeds is our fascination with his subject. For many of us, the endlessly resourceful and indomitable Colin Fletcher opened the door to an entire universe of outdoor experiences. In *Walking Man* Robert Wehrman introduces us to the complex – and deeply troubled – man behind that public persona. I came away more fascinated than ever.



GRAND OPENING

*Benton MacKaye
Trail Association's*

*Fall Branch Falls
Reroute*



*Saturday
September 22
9:00 AM—4:00 PM*

*Enjoy Complimentary
Donuts & Coffee
Hot Dogs
And hike to the falls!*

*Fall Branch Falls Trailhead
On Rock Creek Road*

*jwfbarga@gmail.com
706.946.0336*

Come One, Come All !

by The Publicity Committee



Come one, come all to Benton MacKaye Trail Association's Grand Opening of the Fall Branch Falls Reroute to be held Saturday, September 22 from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM.

Our information tent will be set up at the entrance to the reroute, pictures of our hard working volunteers on the reroute will be posted along the new trail to the falls and a ribbon cutting will be held in the morning. Enjoy complimentary donuts and coffee in the morning and hot dogs in the afternoon ... as well as a leisurely hike through the woods to the falls.

For all you BMTAer's who attend, please be sure to wear your BMTA T-shirts!

And while you're there, chat with our visitors ... tell them about the BMT and about BMTA hikes listed on the Activities Page of the website. Be sure to mention the opportunities available for them to "give something back to the trail" by participating in work trips, becoming a Work Trip or Hike Leader or becoming a Section Maintainer.

Car Pool Anybody? We're building car pools for all BMTA members who want to avoid the hassle of finding a parking spot at the Fall Branch Falls Grand Opening of the Reroute. If you're interested in carpooling from either Cherry Log or from the Food Lion parking lot in Blue Ridge, contact Dave Ricker -- daverickekr526 AT gmail.com or call (678) 787-6965. Car pools will be leaving the parking lots at 8am, 10am and 1pm.

Warning Signs at Fall Branch Falls

by The Publicity Committee with Photos by Ralph Heller and Mark Yost



Mark Yost and Robert Collins



George Owen and Ralph Heller

Saturday, August 18, four BMTA Members went up to Fall Branch Falls and installed two posts and two signs, in English and Spanish, warning not to climb the waterfalls. Thank you!!!

BMTA Nominating Committee for 2019 Officers

Working Table

Nominating Committee Members:

Ken Cissna (chair), Joy Forehand, Debra Guhl, Phil Guhl, George Owen, Dick Evans, Tom Keene (ex officio)

Position	2018 Holder	Yrs. In Service	Nominee for 2019
President	Tom Keene	2	Barry Allen
Vice President	George Owen	1	Joy Forehand
Secretary	Joy Forehand	5	Clare Sullivan
Treasurer	Margaret Meadows	1	Margaret Meadows
GA Maintenance	Barry Allen	4	Phil Guhl
TN/NC Maintenance	None	0	John Zardis
Smokies Coordinator	Larry Dumas	1	Larry Dumas
Membership	Darcy Douglas	1	Darcy Douglas
Publicity	Jeff DePaola	1	Jeff DePaola
Conservation	Dave Ricker	1	Dave Ricker
Hiking	Ken Cissna	2	Ken Cissna
Past President	Bob Ruby	2	Tom Keene
State Rep: GA	Bob Cowdrick	1	Appointed by '19 Pres
State Rep: TN/NC	Rick Harris	5	Appointed by '19 Pres
Newsletter Editor	Kathy Williams	N/A (4)	Appointed by the Board

URGENT! DECISION TIME!

by George Owen, Chair, 2018 BMTA Annual Meeting Committee

Okay, folks, it's lift-anchor-and-join-the-cruise-time! Make your reservations now for the 2018 BMTA Annual Meeting Weekend of November 2-4 (Friday-Sunday), filled with hikes, fun, food and fellowship at Coker Creek Village (henceforth CCV) near Coker Creek Community in Southeast Tennessee. Come for the entire weekend or part of it. **If you haven't already, you need to make reservations for two things: housing and meals.**

Almost 30 have already registered. Here's the latest info:

HOUSING OPTIONS LEFT:

1) Coker Creek Village itself - There is still plenty of room in the bunkhouses, right in the campground center. Join others there or set up your own family or group. You may have groups of mixed sexes or whatever. Either one or two cabins with bunk beds are still available also. Contact CCV at 423-261-2310 for reservations - credit cards accepted. Remember to include your meals (see "Meal Options at CCV" below).

2) Cocobelle Lodge - Admittedly our "fanciest housing" - rooms and baths really nice. Four rooms are now taken, one remains available - hurry! Contact George Owen on this one - he is directly handling the reservations with the owners. It's only a half-mile northwest from CCV.

3) Mountain Creek Hideaway & Grille - A half-mile south of CCV, there are four cabins left there, reasonably priced. Beer and pizza available in the on-site grill. Contact Nadia Dombrowski for info/reservations at 352-563-9824.

4) Cabins at Tellico Plains - Just up TN Hwy. 68 ten-plus miles from CCV, a large number of cabins of various sizes are available through one agency - very nice, many rather new, very clean, and quite reasonable, starting at \$39 plus tax nightly, and up. To rent, contact Mountain View Cabin Rentals - www.tellicologcabins.com - 423-519-2000.

NOTE: *On making reservations at any of the above, be sure to identify yourself as part of "Benton MacKaye Trail Association" in your contact.*

MEAL OPTIONS AT CCV:

Be sure to make your meal reservations at Coker Creek Village for the dining hall. All meals are \$10 each per person, including the meal at the Saturday evening BMTA official annual meeting (let CCV staff know when registering if you have children 12 or under). If you plan to attend the BMTA Annual Meeting Weekend or even just the actual annual meeting night, but are staying somewhere other than Coker Creek Village with reservations for rooming and meal(s) you are still invited to enjoy the Coker Creek Village hearty meals. You may also make arrangements for good, hearty, hike lunches to-go to be made and ready for you around breakfast time. Also, those with special dietary needs should so inform and work out the details with CCV when making meal reservations - regular meals or situational diet meals. (Note: We are roughly keeping count or registrations by the number of persons registering for meals. **There is no BMTA registration fee as such this year - your meals are our registrations.** If coming, but not eating at all at CCV, please let George Owen know.) Please **contact Coker Creek Village at 423-261-2310** and make your arrangements and payment now. Be sure to identify yourself as part of the BMTA when making these arrangements.

ANNUAL MEETING ON SATURDAY NIGHT - BUSINESS AND A GREAT SPEAKER:

Of course, the high and focal point of the whole weekend annual is our BMTA Annual Meeting and featured speaker. This event first recognizes our volunteers, gives one or more special awards, has a few brief reports on our progress, and the election of our 2019 board. Our featured speaker this year is outstanding and was featured in a major article in an earlier newsletter. She is Marci Spencer, author of two histories on each the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests. She has also written a book on Clingman's Dome in the Smokies as well as a book on that national park for children. She is both widely known in our Southeastern Appalachians as an excellent public speaker on our forests and one who does special programs for children on the outdoors. We hope and believe you will not wish to miss her presentation. Marci is a BMTA member and she and her husband John Spencer will be staying with us for the weekend. (Guest are welcome at the annual meeting.)

HIKES:

Rick Harris is in charge of putting together the schedule of hikes that is now available. There will be hikes you may sign up for and enjoy from Friday through Sunday, November 2, 3, and 4. They range from easy to moderate to more difficult. See the hike list on page 19 and sign up for some good ones!

SPECIAL TRIPS FOR NON-HIKERS:

Rick Harris is also providing some special outings from CCV for non-hikers - scenic vehicular trips to special places in the area. These are especially being established for non-hikers who might be mates, significant others, children, and guests of our hikers. Some of our regular hikers might also prefer these trips. Children and youth under 16 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Look these special trips up on page 21 and consider them, including offering your vehicle for trip use, especially if roomy.

FRIDAY NIGHT SPECIAL EVENTS:

The staff at CCV has offered to arrange a big bonfire for us to gather around, visit, tell stories, play music, etc. on Friday night. So we are planning on that. Also, there may be another special event with that - to be announced!

GUESTS:

Your guests are welcome - we love to have people who are interested in the outdoors, hiking, etc., join us. Just be sure to register them with us through meal registration at CCV or if not eating at all at CCV let George Owen know they are coming (his public land line phone number is 706-897-3366).

FURTHER INFORMATION, QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS:

If you need further information, have questions, or wish to make a suggestion, please contact the 2018 Annual Meeting Chair George Owen at his email or land line 706-374-4716 or his confidential cell number if you know it.

2018 ANNUAL MEETING COMMITTEE: Darcy Douglas, Debra Guhl, Rick Harris, George Owen

See you there!!

BMT: Highway 60 to Suspension Bridge, and Back

by Ken Cissna



Here the group looks back while crossing the 265' of the suspension bridge. The water was higher than normal, and more than a little muddy. Reports are that it is the longest bridge of its kind east of the Mississippi River.

With the rain probabilities around 40% (which can mean you get totally drenched—believe me, I know), seven BMTA members and one guest packed our rain gear and tackled the Toonowee Mountain. On Friday August 10, starting from GA 60 near FS 816 and Little Skeenah Creek, we hiked up the mountain and down the other side to what is probably the most photographed portion of the BMT—the suspension bridge across the Toccoa River. Once we'd had lunch and returned we'd done 7.5 miles.



Cindy Minick and Carolyn Sewell sharing a stump that has been chain-sawed into a seat with (left to right) Mike Pilvinsky, Tom Johnson, Ted Minick, Sue Harmon, and Gilbert Treadwell in the background.



We sat on the handily placed logs to have our lunch while watching the river. About ready to head back.

BMTA Presentation at Blue Ridge Adventure Gear

by The Publicity Committee



Cesar Martinez, owner of Blue Ridge Adventure Wear and Larry Dumas.

BMTA's own Larry Dumas was the guest speaker at Blue Ridge Adventure Gear August 7, 2018.

Topics for the presentation included what clothes and equipment are needed for hiking and backpacking as well as safety tips for an enjoyable hike.

Dumas also discussed the Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA) which is tasked with maintaining approximately 300 miles of the Benton MacKaye Trail stretching from Springer Mountain in Georgia to its terminus at Davenport Gap in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

At the conclusion of his presentation, Dumas encouraged people to give back to the trail so many people have come to love. First and foremost, become a member of BMTA. Participate in work trips and / or BMTA-sponsored hikes. Learn how to become a work trip leader, hike leader or section maintainer.

Blue Ridge Adventure Gear graciously donated a percentage of the sales to the BMTA. Thank you!

Get Out Your Orange!

Hunting season is upon us!

We recommend wearing bright safety colors when in the woods during hunting season.

The season varies, but for firearms it is generally October 20-January 13 in Georgia; November 17- January 6 in Tennessee; November 19 – January 1 in North Carolina. Archery and muzzle loader seasons start earlier. Camping, hiking and other recreational uses are allowed year-round in the National Forests, unless otherwise posted at the WMA check station or at a specific recreation site. All WMA visitors are encouraged to wear hunter orange during the hunting seasons. Hunting is not allowed in the Great Smokey Mountains National Park.

You can purchase the BMTA blaze orange cap and shirt from our store at www.bmta.org/Store-Clothing.html.

Click on the following web sites for more detailed information:

Georgia: www.georgiawildlife.com/hunting/regulations

Tennessee: <https://www.tn.gov/twra/hunting/big-game/deer.html>

North Carolina: <http://ncwildlife.org/Hunting/Season-limits>



August Work Report

by Barry Allen

Photos courtesy of Frank Forehand, Mike Kovitch, Phyllis Loman and Steve Bayliss

The Cohutta Wilderness; 37,000 acres of beautiful, rugged, meanness. Years of maintenance deficits. The massive Rough Ridge Fire of 2016. A unique June weather event with heavy rain and strong winds -- all combined to create a perfect storm in the Jacks River -- Beech Bottom corridor, leaving downed trees stacked several feet deep along portions of the Jacks.

Shortly after a heavy rain and flood rolled through the Cohuttas on June 21st, the BMTA received a note from the Forest Service announcing the closure of the Benton MacKaye Trail through the Wilderness. The BMT was one of many trails affected by the June 21 weather event which dumped over four inches of rain and necessitated rescue operations for wilderness campers stranded by the resulting flood. Until assessments could be completed, the Forest Service was closing the wilderness. USFS personnel spent the next two weeks reviewing damage and gradually re-opened areas with minor problems. As the second Saturday in August rolled around, the Benton MacKaye re-opened along the east side of the Cohuttas, but the trail needed saw and brush crews to clean summer growth and storm related problems. More significant damage was evident on the adjoining Penitentiary and Jack's River Trails -- trails which remain closed as of the writing of this article.

After a call for volunteer support, the BMTA once again received heavy turnout for our second Saturday work day, producing what I believe to be the largest number of volunteers since I have been maintenance director! Forty-two people were split into four basic groups spreading out from Watson and Dally Gaps with the end-goal being to cover eight miles of Cohutta Wilderness Trail and a bit just outside the wilderness. The first group would work from Watson Gap to the Jacks River Trail and out to Dally. A second group would work from Dally to Spanish Oak Gap on the Hemp Top Trail, picking up the BMT at Spanish Oak, then working the trail down to the Jacks River Trail and out to Dally. A third group would leave Dally and hike north beyond Penitentiary and work the BMT to Hemp Top. And a fourth group would hike to Spanish Oak and work the trail past Penitentiary, tying in to the previous group. Oh, and by the way, we also had two volunteers working with the Back-Country Horsemen to log out 11 clusters of blowdowns on the Penitentiary Trail, and four volunteers focused on nothing but saw work along the Hemp Top Trail.



Continued next page



It was quite a day to be in the woods! When the day wrapped up around 3:00 or 4:00, after a long six plus hours of work, the trail was in great shape as we retired to Dally for hot dogs and chili. The long-distance crew – walking from Dally to Hemp Top and back – had covered eight miles with sling blades, loppers and saws. Most crews had covered at least four miles.



The story of the day had to be that of a group of young scouts from Signal Mountain, Tennessee, driving up FS 22 to join us at Dally. This group of young men had been stopped by a tree across the Forest Service road about five miles from Dally heading south from Tennessee. Not to be put-off, these young men were guided by the old Boy Scout axiom “Be Prepared.”

Armed with a hatchet or two and a small hand saw, these scouts proceeded to work for the next hour and a half to cut a path through the large tree, just barely wide enough for their vehicle. Upon reaching Dally, these young men had no idea where to begin work since everyone, including me, had long since departed for various points on the compass. I was on the trail beyond Penitentiary with no phone reception and no idea of what had happened to my scouts, until I saw a group of five well-conditioned young men and two adults come bobbing up the trail begging for something to do. They had found me!

Perseverance does pay off. While looking for me, they had checked the trail from Dally to the BMT on the Jacks River Trail, then returned to Dally and headed up Hemp Top. They finally found me after covering four and a half miles on two trails. And they finished the day as the last group off the BMT, eating the final hot dogs and the last of the chips.

Quite a group of young men. These 15 and 16 year-old's – Jack DiMisa, Conor Kinley, Evan Rackel, Ansel Brasel and Zachary Stong, with scout leaders Thomas Brasel and Steve DiMisa – are welcome on my trail anytime!



Tennessee August Work Trip Slashes Section 17

by Clare Sullivan

Photos by Kim Hainge, Steve Cartwright and Larry Van Dyke

On a cool August 25th, 24 Georgia and Tennessee volunteers and eight North Carolina volunteers set out to clear BMT Section 17. This section spans from Mud Gap to Beach Gap near the Cherohala Highway. Hikers were submitting comments it was difficult to get through. There were four crews on a mission to clear. Sawyers Ken Jones, Robert Collins and Dick Evans removed 16 blow downs. Once again Josh Pater and T.J. Pitts attacked the five foot briars covering the trail on the Northern half and then ran 15 miles from Tapoco back to their car parked at Unicoi Crest.



Phil Guhl, Ben Yaun, Mike Kovitch, Debra Guhl and Ed Sullivan built a new bridge spanning the gully created from this summer's rains. Strong-arm Mike Kovitch hammered the rebar like Super Man! The North Carolina Team took turns pushing a "wheeled" trimmer through the grass meadow as well as the rocky trail for 1.5 miles. It was not a self-propelled machine. Energizer Bunny Brenda Harris kept "right on working" her loppers as everyone else relaxed with a cold drink. She didn't realize her team had turned around after meeting the team from the other direction. Brenda was found by conscientious Shane Morrison and Barry Allen. While sawing, lopping and slinging several of our volunteers met BMTA member Rick Parks of Philadelphia, Tennessee hiking from Unicoi Crest into the Citico Wilderness on the Benton MacKaye. They knew their work was appreciated!

Continued next page



There is an interesting grave beside the trail near Mud Gap. The stone reads "Unknown Man Killed by Kirkland Bushwackers." This was an infamous gang during the Civil War. Their relatives still live in the Tellico area.

Steve Cartwright shared the story of another grave. Absalom Strutton, abt. 1774-1852, lived in North Carolina and loved to visit his son who lived in Tennessee. "Ab" thought Tennessee was beautiful. His wish was to be buried in both states. Thus, his grave straddles the North Carolina Tennessee border. Our caring volunteers mowed his fenced grave.

Kim Hainge, a North Carolina volunteer, taught us the difference in the Mountain Sunflower and Bear Paw Flower. The flowers look very similar but the leaves are different. Kim is noted for her knowledge and love of wildflowers.



The Cherohala Highway is so popular for motorcycles that a professional photographer captures photos for US129Photos.com, Highest Quality Photos on the Dragon. Bob Cowdrick found Ed's Big White Truck (as it is known by our grand-kids) made their website. HA!

A huge **thank you** to the 32 volunteers who worked diligently, making Section 17 much more enjoyable to hike. Twelve volunteers stopped for lunch at Buckets and Brews in Tellico Plains. The owner stated he was going hiking tomorrow as he knew there wasn't a log on the trail!

SEPTEMBER WORK TRIP ANNOUNCEMENT

Sections 8, 9, 10 PLUS

by Barry Allen

- ◆ **Where:** Watson Gap
- ◆ **When:** Saturday, September 8, 2018
- ◆ **Meet:** 7:30 at the Village Restaurant in Blue Ridge, GA (4131 East 1st Street, Blue Ridge, GA) or 8:30 at Watson Gap on Old GA Hwy 2/USFS 64.
- ◆ **Plan for the Day:** **Tree and brush removal, Storm clean-up**
- ◆ **What to bring:** Minimum two liters of water, long pants, boots, gloves and snack.
- ◆ **Contact:** Barry Allen at [bmtabarry AT gmail.com](mailto:bmtabarry@gmail.com) or 770-294-7384

On Saturday, September 8, we will do something I have never done before! We will try to work three sections of trail in a single day!! But of course, we will modify the plan based on final turn-out.

Watson Gap will be the jump off point for three work teams. I'd like for everyone to do something they enjoy or see a new section of trail. We'll need leaders and participants for three events. The first event will be on the Jacks River Trail system. As good National Forest volunteers, we'll go where the need is greatest in September. So we'll send at least two cross-cut certified saw teams (including swampers) to Dally Gap to hike into the Jacks River and begin removing debris from the first (and second) river crossing on the Jacks River. These teams will get wet (to knee level) crossing the river (you may consider carrying some boat shoes or sandals and convertible pants for the river, before changing back to boots on the other side). Bring gloves and folding hand saws if you have them to help with small debris removal. I'll bring Pulaskis and four to five bow saws of various sizes. Cross-cut sawyers will have their hands full for the day. If time allows, we also have a couple of trees down on the BMT within the first half mile south from the JRT.

The second group will work with one sawyer from Pate Gap down to the South Fork of the Jacks River. Summer growth and small tree removal will be the order of the day. There are a few water diversions that need attention, but the South Fork is a beautiful place for a leisurely lunch.

The third group will see the ferns of Flat Top Mountain near Dyer Gap. If we have enough volunteers, we'll dispatch a group from Watson Gap to Dyer Cemetery/Dyer Gap to work a bit of trail on both sides of Flat Top Mountain through the "Trail of Ferns." This will be mostly lopper and sling blade work, but we do have a few trees down on this section as well.

Let me know if you have a work preference for the day and I hope to see you there.



Membership Report

by Darcy Douglas

The Corporate members who pay a higher rate for membership than regular folks are listed in the newsletter from time to time. Please note these members and offer them your business as you can!! Feel free to ask for email/phone numbers if you need to contact them.

- *Historic Tapoco Lodge of Robbinsville, North Carolina
- *Korean Alpine Club of Georgia
- *North Georgia Mountain Outfitters
- *Save Georgia's Hemlocks
- *Starr Mountain Outfitters
- *Ens and Outs (Unitarian Universalist Church)
- *Lowery and Associates Land Surveying, LLC
- *Airbnb Jeff Patterson of Ducktown/Copperhill (does hiker shuttles, too)

We've had quite a few new members this summer! Welcome! Next month we'll start the renewals for 2019, and you'll be able to renew at the Annual Meeting at Coker Creek, too. Several people have resolved the issues with the email providers who block the BMTA website mailings so they will be getting their newsletters again. If there is anything anyone thinks might need changing about the membership process, please let me know. We will be redoing our website soon, so the time is ideal for changes. We are very glad YOU are a Benton MacKaye Trail Association member!

Endurance Runners Check the Trail



Twins Sam and Ben Carder with their father David Carder at Bushy Head Gap.

Recently we have been receiving valuable input regarding trail conditions from endurance trail runners.

David Carder, with twin sons Sam and Ben, drove from Cumming and volunteered to inspect a section of the BMT. Ralph Heller was their shuttle driver. They covered 17.2 miles, which is just a walk in the park for father David, who runs ultra-marathons. His two sons run cross country at school.

Another endurance pair was checking trail on Sections 11 and 12 -- 20.5 miles.

And then TJ Pitts and Josh Pater checked Section 18 from Tapoco Lodge all the way to Beech Gap, 15 miles, -- after the work trip from Mud Gap to Beech Gap.

Thank you all!!!

Upcoming Hikes

by Ken Cissna, Hiking Director

BMTA normally schedules a minimum of two hikes per month, one of five to eight miles and moderate difficulty, and one that is shorter and easier. In addition, we have occasional backpacking hikes and more difficult ones that might be called “hardy hikes.” Occasionally we co-sponsor hikes with other organizations. Although more hikes are in Georgia than the other states, you will find hikes in all three BMT states: Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee.

If you are interested in leading a hike or have a hike you’d like to see us offer with someone else leading, please contact me at kcissna AT usf.edu or 706-636-1741.

The hikes for the next couple of months are listed below. We have late summer and early fall hikes in today’s list. We still have some “water” hikes that you’ll want your water shoes and hiking poles for stream crossings. More hikes will be forthcoming, so check the Activities Calendar of the website and next month’s newsletter for updates. Enjoy.

September

September 26 (Wednesday) Cartecay Loop.

4 miles, easy to moderate mostly along the Cartecay River.

Contact hike leader Sara Bland at jsbland AT windstream.net

September 28 (Friday) BMT: Patterson Ridge Plunge.

Approximately 5 miles, easy plus; approximately 2.5 hours on the trail.

This leisurely hike samples the great views (and posh houses) along Patterson Ridge in the Sisson Cherry Lake community and then follows a little used section of the BMT for a long downhill to Boardtown Road. After a break we will hike back to the ridge at a leisurely pace. Much of the trail follows a nice stream with excellent stands of Creeping Cedar and Galax. With luck we will enjoy some early fall color. After the hike, those who wish will head to Blue Jeans Pizza in Blue Ridge for a recovery ale and lunch.

Contact hike leaders Tom and Jane Keene at tkbmta AT gmail DOT com or 770-548-4935 (text ok).

October

October 3 (Wednesday) Talking Rock Nature Preserve

4 miles, easy.

Contact hike leader Sara Bland at jsbland AT windstream.net

October 6 (Saturday) BMT: Highway 515 to Weaver Creek and return.

5 miles, easy. Mostly dirt roads.

Contact Hike Leader Tom Sewell at SewellTom AT yahoo.com or text to (706) 669-6406

October 30 (Tuesday) Big Frog Mtn. via Big Frog Mtn. Trail and BMT trail and return.

11-12 miles total. Moderate to strenuous difficulty; 1300’ elevation change. Uphill first half, downhill last half. Hiking time about 7 hours. Beautiful views along the ridge lines along the way.

Contact Hike Leader Tom Sewell at SewellTom AT yahoo.com or text to (706)669-6406

Continued next page

BMTA Annual Meeting Hikes and Day Road Trips

by Rick Harris

Friday-November 2

- Turtletown Falls (about 4 miles, moderate) - Ken Cissna
- Bald River Falls and Cow Camp Trail - Getting the majority of the waterfalls and a one mile walk along the Tellico River on the road (4 mi round trip, moderate) - Rick Harris
- Sandy Gap to Unicoi Gap on the BMT (8 miles, moderate) – Barry Allen
- Indian Boundary Lake Trail (3.2 mi, easy) + visit to Bald River Falls if time (George Owen) – leaves at 1 PM.

Saturday-November 3

- Unicoi Turnpike Trail and BMT from Unicoi Gap to TN68 (about 7 miles) - George Owen
- Coker Creek Falls Trail from the Falls to the Hiwassee River then up to TN 68 (about 7 miles, moderate) - Rick & Brenda Harris
- Whigg Meadow from Mud Gap on Skyway and back (3.5 miles moderate) – Bob Ruby
- Tellico River Rd to Bald River Road via BMT/Sugar Mountain (about 7 miles) - ???

Sunday-November 4

- Lost Creek Section of BMT (6 miles, easy) – Ken Cissna
- BMT/John Muir Trail from Childers Creek to Towee Creek (4.2 miles) - ???
- BMT/John Muir Trail from Towee Creek to Coker Creek (5.8 miles) - Rick & Brenda Harris
- FS221 on north flank of Big Frog Mountain to Ocoee River, then up Rhododendron Trail to White-water. Center (5 miles, easy) – George Owen

Other possible hikes to consider if we can trade out a hike or add a hike:

BMT to Bob Bald from the Skyway - 8 miles, moderate to difficult.

Falls Branch Falls off the Skyway - 2.6 miles, steep downhill for 0.5 miles, then back up.

For the non-hiker road trips:

Friday-November 2

- Short hikes to Bald River Falls, Conasauga Falls and Coker Creek Falls, lunch in Tellico Plains - ???

Saturday-November 3

- Cherohala Skyway Hooper Bald, then to Whigg Meadow, then down North River Road to Fish Hatchery, then out along Tellico River Road and Bald River Falls. Bring lunch with you to eat along the way. - ???
- Cherohala Skyway Visitor Center, Charles Hall Museum, Bald River Falls, lunch at one of the places in Tellico (Tellico KATS, Tellico Grains, Mexican Restaurant, or Tellicafe) - ???

Sunday-November 4

- Ocoee River along US64 from Ocoee #1 dam to Copperhill, with stops at Ocoee #1 dam, kayak/raft take-out and put-in, powerhouse and flume, Ocoee Whitewater Center, and the Burra Burra Mine in Copperhill, lunch in Copperhill.

The deadline for the October Newsletter is September 30, 2018. Thank you!