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BMTA Officers 2019-2020

President:	Barry Allen
Vice President:	Joy Forehand
Secretary:	Clare Sullivan
Treasurer:	Margaret Meadows
GA M/C:	Phil Guhl
TN/NC M/C:	Rick Harris
Smokies Coord:	Larry Dumas
Hiking Director:	Ken Cissna
Store:	Ken Cissna
Membership:	Frank Forehand
Publicity:	Jeff DePaola
Conservation:	Dave Ricker
Past President:	Tom Keene
Newsletter:	Kathy Williams
State Rep GA:	Bob Cowdrick
State Rep TN/NC:	Larry Van Dyke



BMTA Headquarters

Benton MacKaye Trail Association



VOLUME 36, ISSUE 12

DECEMBER 2019

President's Column

'And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord shone around them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' Luke 2:8-11

There are times when I struggle for days to pen the right message to membership. What do I need to convey to the Association this month? What is the right message to send and how do I say it? This month, I decided on a short and simple message: the Christmas season should always be about family and friends, rejoicing in the gifts we have been given and, more importantly, the gifts we have the opportunity to give.

I chose the message from the gospel of Luke for a reason: when I re-read the Christmas story and thought of 'shepherds, abiding in the field', I couldn't help but see our association as 'shepherds', caring for the trail and the forests through which it passes. That is certainly a gift which we have given all year long.

Enjoy your holiday season. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas. And I look forward to the new year and the challenges we have before us.



Our Self-proclaimed Charge

“Leaving a footpath for generations to follow....”

by Patrick Ward, “Patman”



The Benton MacKaye Trail is one of the many jewels of our wonderful nation. The trail brings us together and takes us on journeys refreshing and reviving. We find ourselves embraced by the beauty of the woodlands, mountain streams and striking vistas. Certainly a joy when experienced solo and even more so when shared. I have been hiking for over 50 years, having a family which utilized trails all over the nation and world to spend time together. The pursuit of fellowship in this setting continued with our own three children and now our first grandchild, Millie. Millie took her first hike to the top of Mount Yonah when she was just three months old and now is hiking in her own shoes at 18 months. In the fall of 2019, we enjoyed a hike and picnic along a section of the BMT, which included Long Creek Falls, during which this adorable picture was captured. Wanting to be like the big people Millie did hike some of the trail on her own two feet and even found a hiking stick all by herself. How wonderful it is to share the trail with her. Being a BMT maintainer and avid hiker I know the importance of people contributing many hours, muscle and sweat to keep the trail in usable and pleasant condition. The charge we have given ourselves, “Leaving a footpath for generations to follow...” is one physical in nature and yet also abstract in thought.

We not only provide a physical path but also set an example and establish a legacy to encourage others to do the same. What a tremendous opportunity we have to bring along our progeny to understand the value of this charge. My hope is that Millie will grow to have an even deeper fondness for what the trail can offer and will also one day be a maintainer and disciple of the BMT. With much gratitude the Ward family thanks the BMTA for keeping a strong cadence of working the trail and encouraging people to use it. Bringing the generations to the trail and allowing them to experience the wonders of creation is a privilege and joy. Millie has many more years and miles to travel. My hope is that a good portion of those will be on the trails.....and that someday, she too will be leading later generations to follow in our footsteps.



***Time to Renew
Your Membership!***

Use this link to Renew Now:

<http://www.bmta.org/Membership.php>

Annual Meeting at Fontana Village Lodge

by Joy Forehand with photos courtesy of Kim Hainge

BMTA's Annual Meeting was held October 31 – November 3, 2019, at the beautiful Fontana Village Lodge in North Carolina. Kicking off the weekend event was Thursday's Halloween Cemetery Hike and several members arrived early for the trek. Unfortunately, the hikers were greeted with a blustery rainstorm. Hike Leader Dick Evans persisted and participants drove to the Payne Cemetery just off the Benton MacKaye Trail in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. With umbrellas in hand, they toured the area. There were six folks who braved the weather for this hike. The dedicated hikers returned to the lodge only to find all of Fontana Village was without power and BMTAer's spent most of the afternoon in the lobby in front of a large, inviting fireplace. As nite fell, Fontana was prepared, placing LED lanterns in the hallways and handing them out to guests. Somehow the restaurant managed to prepare a delicious buffet and even remained open after hours to accommodate those arriving late due to the storm.

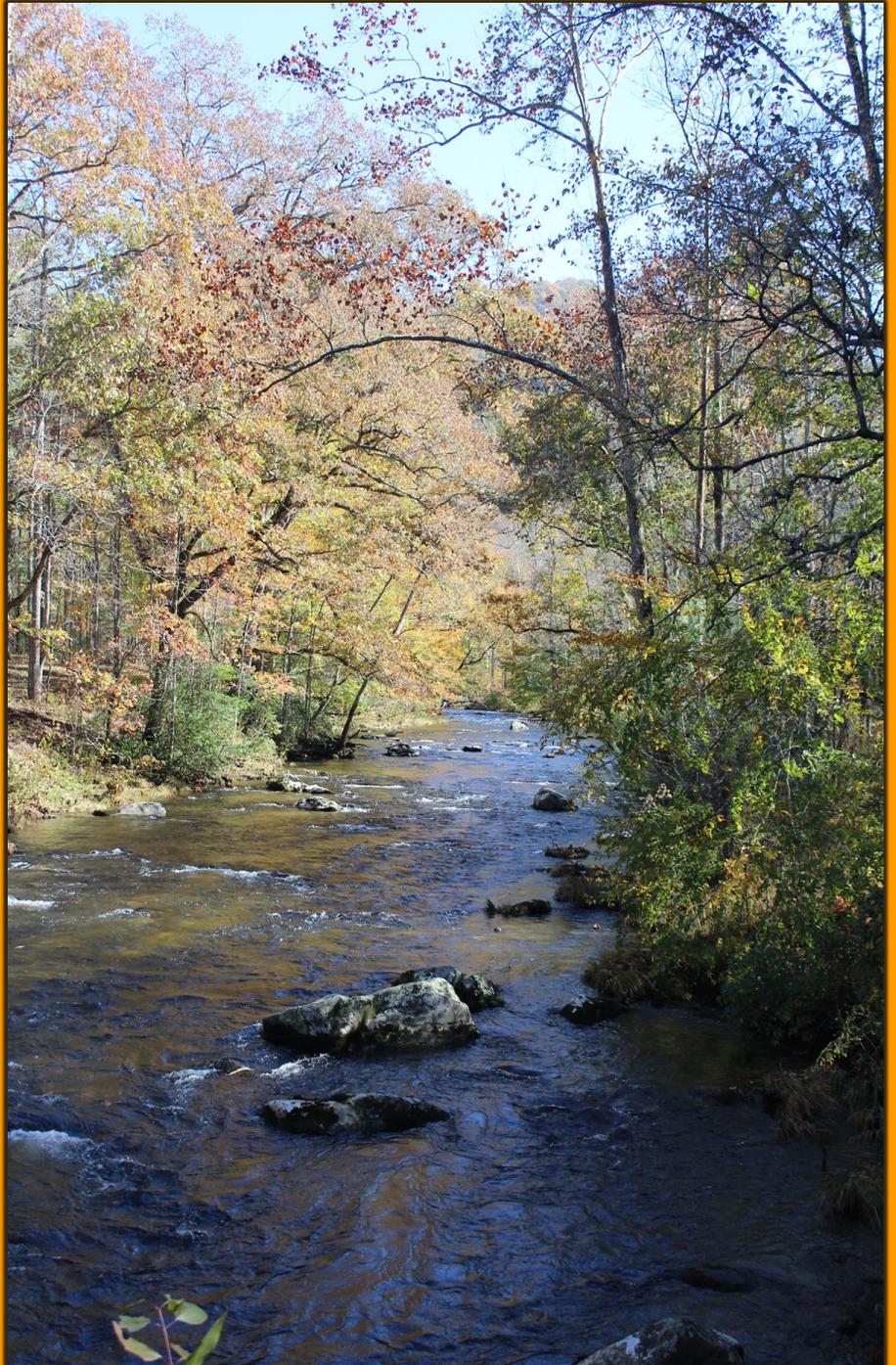


Friday morning hikers assembled bright and early to embark on day's hikes. George Owen led 36 hikers on a hike beginning at Fontana Dam and continuing on the BMT / Lakeshore Trail while Dick Evans led his entourage to the Twenty Mile Ranger Station for a cold and windy hike to Proctor Field Gap and back, a six mile hike in the beautiful changing leaves along the creek. Some folks participated independently – about 23 folks visited the area.

Continued next page

The attendance at the Friday Nite Social was the highest ever as 90 plus members and guests enjoyed the complimentary hors d' oeuvres while sipping their favorite drink.

Saturday found the morning temperatures had plummeted to the point that some gravel roads were icy / the chilling breeze on the lake a mite too cold for many to endure. Dick Evans, George Owen and other BMTA volunteers quickly re-organized the hiking program for the day. Owen led a group of 11 BMTAer's to enjoy the view from Lookout Rock. Dick Evans took a stalwart group of hikers on a boat ride to the area of the old town of Proctor and visited two cemeteries in the area, returning on the Fontana Ferry later that afternoon. Rick and Brenda Harris chose the Deep Creek Waterfall Hike.



The attendance at the Saturday evening Annual Meeting topped out at 95 ... the largest BMTA Annual Meeting ever!

First on the docket was the election of officers:

President	Barry Allen	Smokies Coordinator	Larry Dumas
Vice President	Joy Forehand	Membership	Frank Forehand
Secretary	Clare Sullivan	Publicity	Jeff DePaola
Treasurer	Margaret Meadows	Conservation	Dave Ricker
GA Maintenance	Phil Guhl	Hiking	Ken Cissna
TN/NC Maintenance	Rick Harris		

Later Barry Allen appointed **Bob Cowdrick** for the **State Rep GA** and **Larry Van Dyke** for the **State Rep TN/NC**.

Throughout the evening, winning tickets for the Annual Meeting Raffle were drawn and the excited winners claimed their prizes. A huge success, the raffle raised \$1,170 for the new Big Stamp Parking project! Our thanks to all who generously donated such great prizes: **Author Bob Cowdrick, Starr Mountain Outfitters, Fontana Village, Poole's Bar-B-Que, REI, Author Richard Judy, Six Moon Designs, The Hike Inn, The Picture Place on the River, The Pink Pig, Unicoi Lodge** and the **USFS Whitewater Center**.

The featured speaker of the evening, Sarah Thompson, Executive Director of the Southwestern NC Planning and Economic Development Commission based in Sylva, spoke about the "Councils of Governments" that exist in all the areas of the BMT, as well as some aspects of the Appalachian Regional Commission and the impact of those on our lives.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of awards. Before beginning the presentations, Georgia Maintenance Director, Phil Guhl announced some very impressive statistics:
BMTA volunteers put in: **1,028 Individual Trips to Maintain the Trail, 5,009.6 Hours Spent Maintaining** and **2,159.73 Hours for Travel Time** (*Excludes Festival Hours).

Sixty-one trail workers who worked a minimum of 30 hours on the BMT were awarded a coveted 2019 Maintainer T-Shirt.



Thirty trail workers who put in 100 hours or more working on the trail were presented the new 100 Hour Club jacket as an award. Georgia Maintenance Director Phil Guhl led the way with 403.5 hours, followed by Barry Allen (379.75 hours) and Debra Guhl (329.75 hours). Those working a total of 100 hours for the first time were given a Maintainer's Hat.



Larry Van Dyke was named Volunteer of the Year. Van Dyke was tasked with revising and revamping BMTA's antiquated to non-existent email communication system. Through Mail Chimp, BMTA now is able to communicate with all members, regardless of who their Internet Provider may be. Van Dyke's new email setup also allows Mail Chimp to work seamlessly with Facebook, Instagram, Twitter ... as well as with BMTA's future website (currently in process).

Keith Mertz was awarded the Trail Worker of the Year Pulaski. A member of BMTA since 2014, Mertz, along with Ellie Doughty, maintains sections 17d and 18a. Mertz put in 155.75 hours this year.

Sunday was the final day of the Annual Meeting. Dick Evans led a contingency of hikers to see the beautiful views of the mountains along the Bear Pen Gap section of the BMT. George Owen led another group along the BMT in the vicinity of Tapoco Lodge. Both groups met for a delicious lunch at Tapoco Lodge before departing for home.



Barry Allen presents Larry Van Dyke with the Volunteer of the Year plaque.



Keith Mertz, Trail Worker of the Year.

MEMBERSHIP

by Frank Forehand, Membership Director

Just a reminder that your membership in BMTA is due for renewal. If you have not renewed for 2020, now is a great time. Your membership will be valid thru the end of 2020. If not a member, now is the perfect time to join! Your annual membership provides funds for materials and tools to maintain and improve our trail. Some funds also are held in reserve so that ... if an opportunity presents itself for BMTA to acquire an easement or otherwise move to eliminate one of the BMT's remaining road walks, the BMTA can move quickly to do so. This fund is growing, but additional funds are needed. You can go to our membership page and click on [Membership](#) to pay through PayPal. Or, mail a check to BMTA, PO Box 6, Cherry Log, GA 30522. Please include the completed Membership Form available for download on the Membership Page. The annual fees are: \$20 for Individual, \$30 for Family, or \$15 for Student / Retired.

For any donation of \$50 or more, you will receive an Individual or Family membership for 2020. We also want to welcome our Newest Corporate Members:

Mountain Place Realty

Blue Ridge, GA

Jeff DePaola: (404) 550-4488

<https://www.mountainplacerealty.com/>

North Georgia Treks Photography

Ellijay, GA

<https://www.facebook.com/northgeorgiatreks/>

Instagram #northga.treks

www.northgeorgiatreks.com

TN Maintenance on Section 12c

by Clare Sullivan

Rain spoiled the work trip plans for our 21 volunteers on November 23, 2019. We pursued our task on November 24, 2019. Our day began with a real sale on extra BMTA shirts from Ken Cissna. Shopping was fun! Enjoying the assistance of three shuttle drivers, 14 volunteers were able to completely clear the BMT from Kimsey Highway to McFarland Road as well as a half-mile into 12d, McFarland Road to Lost Creek Campground. The sawyers enjoyed amusing stories by Bo Rudder as they walked from downed tree to downed tree. We welcomed, first timer Rita Pendergast who jumped right in and attacked the trail-blocking briars with a vengeance. The teams cleared 23 trees and an enormous number of seedlings and thorns. A social time with snacks and drinks celebrated the end of our hard work. Photographer Larry Van Dyke kept popping-up for Instagram and Facebook shots. His goal was proving women work just as hard as men. Afterwards several went on to an early dinner at The Gondolier Restaurant.



BMTA Matching Gifts

by Bob Cowdrick

Matching gifts? What is a matching gift?

If you are not familiar with matching gifts, once an employee has contributed and submitted the appropriate paperwork companies will make donations to the nonprofit specified ... in this case, the BMTA. For some companies contributions can be money or time (volunteer hours). I met an individual this summer who worked for Boeing and for every hour he worked on the trail crew, Boeing made a contribution to his organization.

One of the most common reasons why donors do not submit matching gift requests is because the employee does not know that his employer offers such programs. Some examples of companies that participate include: General Electric, Apple, Coca-Cola, American Express and Home Depot.

If you are interested in donating to the BMTA and are employed by a benevolent company, then consider investigating the matching gift options. Contact your benefits coordinator for the required forms. If you currently are not employed by a matching gift company, consider reaching out to friends and relatives who are. Share with them the BMTA mission of "...leaving a footpath for generations to follow" and seek their support.

Donations can be made by sending a check to the BMTA (PO Box 6, Cherry Log, GA 30522) or by using PayPal at BMTA.org.



Amazon Smile Benefits BMTA

If you are going to make purchases from Amazon please use this address: BMTA's unique link is <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/58-1428009>. If you do so, Amazon will direct a small share of your purchases to BMTA. A convenient way to do this is to click on the link and then bookmark that page on your toolbar or wherever you keep hiking links. **Thank you!**

Cherohala Skyway Festival

by Rick Harris

It looked like the weather was going to be horrendous and we were going to have to move the Skyway Festival indoors at the Tellico Plains High School. But the night before the festival, the forecast changed to breezy and a low chance of rain. So it was held outdoors near the museum and the visitor center. And it was very well attended. The place was busy all day. There were scads of craft booths and food stations, a play area for kids as well as several old time tool and machine demonstrations. Live bluegrass and country music played on the stage all day long.

Our BMTA tent again highlighted a crosscut saw station. Numerous kids and quite a number of grown up kids cut log circles with a crosscut saw to take home to dry and varnish as pot trivets.

Not a drop of rain fell on us, but after we took down the tent and got in our vehicles, the rains returned. We were very lucky. Perfect day. Only problem was the wind. Our tent weathered the winds well, but other tents were not so fortunate. Those heavy bean bags on the four corners got a workout.



Thanks to our volunteers which included Rick and Brenda Harris, Clare Sullivan, Ben Yaun, Candise and Larry Van Dyke and Jeff DePaola.

Bob Cowdrick was also at the festival selling his new book.

Saving Georgia's Hemlocks

by Ken Cissna

On Saturday November 16, 2019, nine members of the BMTA spent most of a beautiful day saving hundreds of Eastern Hemlocks along Chester and Long creeks in the Three Forks area of the Chattahoochee National Forest. The trees were near the end of Section 1, along or near Section 2 of the BMT and in the vicinity of Long Creek Falls.

The event was organized by Donna Shearer of Save Georgia's Hemlocks (SGH) and included members of Trout Unlimited, Georgia Forest Watch, Georgia Appalachian Trail Club, Nature Conservancy as well as Save Georgia's Hemlocks—48 people altogether. We worked in teams of five or six led by a trained team leader from SGH. Four hundred and eighty trees were treated.



BMTA members (left to right): Steve Bayliss, Kelly Bayliss, Dale Clark, Donna Shrearer (member and event organizer from SGH), Joanie Baker, Ken Cissna, Debbie Crowder and Tom Atcheson. Not pictured Toni Freeman.

The eastern hemlock has been attacked by the hemlock woolly adelgid, an invasive species that arrived 20 or more years ago from Asia. Left alone, it will kill every hemlock within 10 years of it being infested.

Although mass treatments of millions of acres are not yet possible, individual trees can be saved for a period by injecting a specific pesticide into the roots of the tree. Most of the teams were locating and retreating about 30 trees that had been treated and tagged approximately six years ago, which is about as long as the treatment is effective. A few teams were giving trees their initial treatment.



**Don't Wait
Join Now!**

Use this link to Join:

<http://www.bmta.org/Membership.php>

Half Price at the Hike Inn!

by Ken Cissna

Again this year, BMTA will be able to enjoy a *half price* winter outing at the beautiful and historic Len Foote Hike Inn, Georgia's extraordinary backcountry lodge. Anyone wanting to go must reserve their room quickly before they're sold out.

We'll **arrive on Wednesday, February 26th, and depart on the 27th**. The hike is about five miles and of moderate difficulty. Cost is about \$100 per person for a two-person room (including tax)—about \$70 for a single. The hot showers are wonderful, the rooms are heated, and the dinner after arrival and breakfast the next morning are superb! For information about the Len Foote Hike Inn, go to hike-inn.com/.

Maybe the best of my many visits was the time it snowed overnight so we woke to a winter wonderland and loved getting to hike out in the snow.

If you're interested, contact Ken Cissna, BMTA Hike Director, at hikeleader@bmta.org for further information.



BMTA and Hornaday Conservation Weekend

by Bob Cowdrick

Jeff DePaola and I attended the Atlanta Area Boy Scout's Hornaday Midway Event on November 9, 2019 at Camp Woodruff in Blairsville, Georgia. The Hornaday Award is presented to Scouts who earn six required merit badges and complete a conservation project. Eighteen different merit badges were offered to the Scouts this weekend that included energy, fish and wildlife management, soil and water conservation, public health, forestry and personal fitness.

The Hornaday Awards are highly prized by those who have received them. Over the past 80 years approximately 1,100 medals have been awarded. These awards represent a substantial commitment of time and energy by individuals who have learned the meaning of a conservation/environmental ethic.

The Midway Event was to expose the Scouts to conservation project opportunities that are available as well as to introduce them to organizations that could use their assistance. The BMTA was one of 10 organizations participating. With over 370 Scouts attending we had a great turnout.

We handed out trail cards and information sheets to the Scouts that stopped at our booth. Most were not aware of the BMT so we quickly provided information about our wonderful, secluded trail. They plan to repeat this event in November of 2020, at Camp Woodruff and we are looking forward to attending.

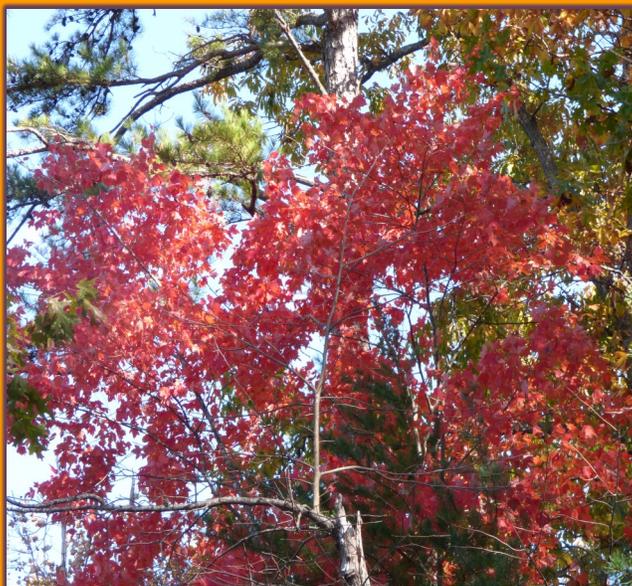
Amadahy Trail

by Ken Cissna with photos courtesy of Tom Atcheson

What a day! Monday, November 11, 2019. Crisp and sunny. Beautiful fall color. Peaceful lake. Lovely trail. And, yes, great company.

Seventeen of us completed the five-mile Amadahy Trail at Woodring Branch along Carters Lake, including a side trip to the marine campground for lunch: Tom and Sharon Atcheson, Larry Brannon, Ken Cissna and **Artie**, Debbie Crowder and **Ruff**, Carolyn Lakes, Darrell McKinney and **Jenny**, Mike Pilvinsky, Beth Roberts and **Bosco**, Betty Sammis and **Jingles**, and George and Helen Tenney. Artie, Ruff, Jenny, Bosco, and Jingles are dogs, and all were very well behaved.

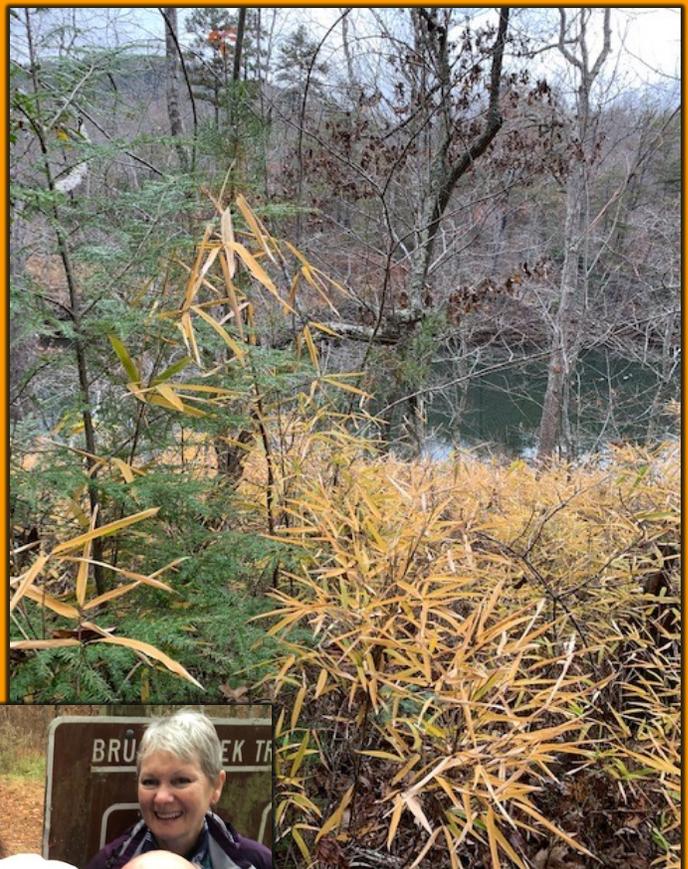
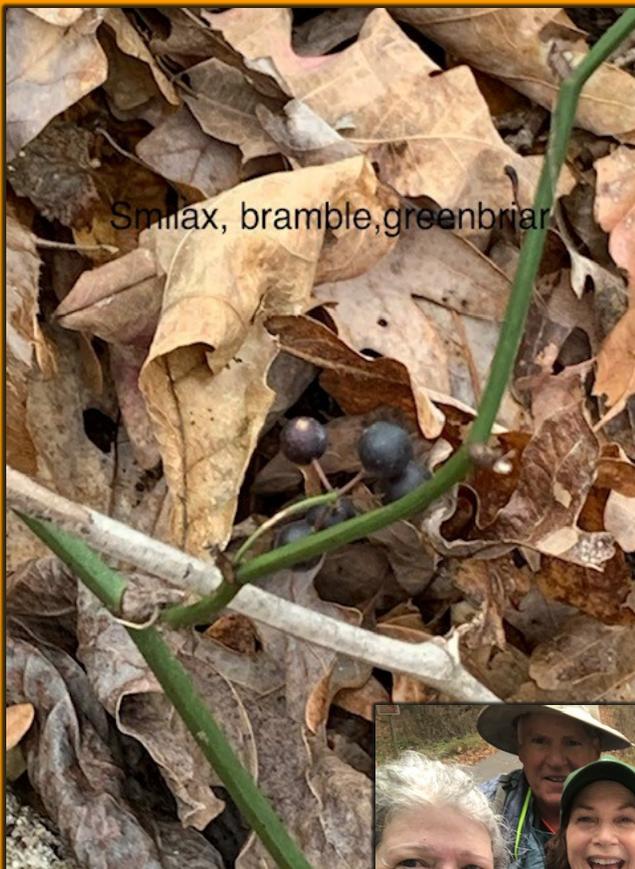
With the storm that came in Monday evening and overnight—lots of rain and wind and cold temperatures—this may have been the last real leaf color of the year *and* perhaps *the best* fall color most of us have seen this year.



Rain, Rain, Go Away, BMTA Hikers Want to Play!

by Clare Sullivan

Eighteen hikers were on the original list for the seven mile Brush Creek Trail hike Friday, November 22, 2019. The weather forecast was for 50 per cent chance of rain by 1:00 p.m. One by one, 12 hikers declined to do the hike. Six hikers chanced the rain and had a grand time! We decided to shorten the hike and be back at our vehicles by 1:00. Rain sprinkled on us the last 30 minutes of the hike. The winding trail had lovely views of the hidden Ocoee Lake and we listened to an eagle's call. Although many of us detest brambles (aka: greenbrier, smilax) due to their sharp thorns, we learned it is a winter and spring edible. Native Americans used the new growth in the spring as a delicious vegetable, both raw and cooked. The bulbous roots were used as a carbohydrate source. Tea from the leaves were traditionally used for an upset stomach. The dark blue berries were eaten in the winter. Yes, Ed Sullivan ate a berry, and he survived. The Brush Creek Trail is part of the 30-mile Tanasi Trail System network in the Cherokee National Forest. You can get a free map of the entire system at the Ocoee Whitewater Center (OWC). The OWC will reopen April 1, 2020. The trail system is open year-round. Our hike ended up being six miles.



BMTA Opens New Springer Mountain Parking Lot

by George Owen

Clearing for the new Benton MacKaye Trail's own Springer Mountain parking lot at Big Stamp Gap on Forest Service Road 42 began in mid-October. On June 16 the first gravel truck arrived and the others soon followed. This lot, with a capacity for approximately 15 vehicles (including two compact car slots), has long been a dream for our trail club. The Blue Ridge Ranger District of the Chattahoochee National Forest was responsible for the clearing and other arrangements.



Our new BMT Springer Mountain parking lot stands cleared awaiting the first gravel truck.



First gravel truck arrives. "Watch out, Barry!"



Gravel begins to be dumped.



Two Forest Service personnel and BMTA's David Ricker start shoveling and then spreading gravel.

Many more finishing touches followed in the days afterwards. On the ground, initial work involved BMTA President Barry Allen, GA Maintenance Director Phil Guhl, Dave Ricker and George Owen. Signs were developed and installed by teams working with Ralph Heller. George Owen and Darcy Douglas created and blazed the 60-foot connecting trail from the parking lot to the Benton MacKaye Trail itself.

Continued next page

Then on Saturday, November 9, BMTA GA Maintenance Director Phil Guhl, assisted by President Allen, led a large crew to the lot to install log parking guides, both upright and flat, to mark the entire parking area. Initial signs were also installed and other jobs completed. Debra Guhl's luncheon crew provided an on-site meal for the occasion. As this article is written, only the kiosk remains to be installed in the parking lot, hopefully to be completed and installed in December.



Well-graveled parking lot viewed days later.



Sign and blaze marking the start of 60-foot connecting trail from the parking lot to the BMT.

Visitors to the BMT immediately began using this lot after the gravel was poured with usage increasing after signs and other installations were completed. It serves as quick access, heading southwest on the BMT from the parking lot for these points: Owen's Vista - 0.4 miles, Benton MacKaye Plaque - 1.2 miles above the vista and then a final 0.3 miles to Springer Mountain's summit bluff vista. It also services the 4.7-mile popular Springer Mountain upper loop and summit, including the southern termini for both the Appalachian and Benton MacKaye trails.

First envisioned and proposed in the early BMT years, this lot was "resurrected" as a project to be considered strongly by the BMTA and USFS about four years ago. It was delayed a few months when the Forest Service NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) archeological survey discovered buried Native American artifacts at the first Big Stamp proposed lot site right next to the southwest side of the BMT/FS Rd. 42 intersection. This stopped the project "cold." Determined as ever George Owen found another fairly flat location southward by over a hundred yards of the first proposed site and it subsequently passed the NEPA-required biological and archeological surveys - thus by October the clearing began!

This lot stands on its own to not only service the BMT but also to complement the Appalachian Trail parking lot 1.8 miles to the north on FS Rd. 42.

We hope to install the kiosk and remaining signs for the lot and nearby trail in December. Then we are considering a formal opening of the trail and publicity for it to the general public.

In all this our special thanks for making the lot possible in the first place goes out to District Ranger Andy Baker and his Blue Ridge Ranger District staff, especially to two who gave it much time, Towdy Tipton and John Stephens, as well as other staff from that office.

Georgia December Work Trip Section 1a and 1b/Big Stamp Parking Lot

by Phil Guhl

Where: Sections 1a and 1b, plus finish the parking lot at Big Stamp Gap.

When: Saturday, December 14, 2019.

Meet: 8:00 at the Hardee's (1208 Industrial Blvd, East Ellijay, GA 30540) or 9:15 at Big Stamp Gap parking lot.

Plan for the Day:

- Finish the parking lot.
- Water diversions.

What to bring: Minimum two liters of water, long pants, boots, gloves and snack.

Contact: Phil Guhl at bmtaphil@gmail.com or [770-548-5590](tel:770-548-5590) (Please RSVP so we can plan on the number of tools, helmets, and FOOD!)

Can you feel it in the air? Yep...me, too. It is the feeling of another second Saturday creeping up on us and time to get out there to keep the Benton MacKaye Trail preserved and safe for hikers!

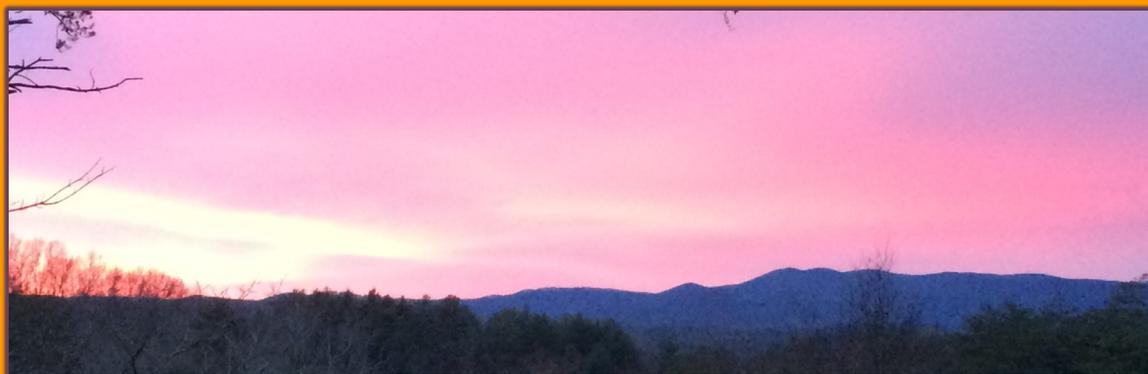
We have a few things to wrap up at the Big Stamp parking lot:

- Install the kiosk
- Install signs
- Spread new gravel, as needed

Then...we have some ongoing housekeeping. Clean out existing erosion control measures, e.g., water diversions, knick/grade reversals, and check dams, and to install new ones, as needed.

What does this mean in laymen's terms? We need a bunch of folks since we will have two crews. I will take the erosion control team (aka Team Transpose) and Barry Allen will take the parking lot team (aka Team Fruition). I expect a fun, productive, and safe day in the woods...all to be finished off with sustenance from our Chuck Bosses Debra Guhl and Sue Ricker.

Come one...come all...I look forward to working alongside each of you!



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 hikeleader@bmta.org.

The hikes for the next couple of months are listed below. Winter hikes always provide great views and cool hiking temperatures, which for many hikers make for the best hiking season of the year. More hikes will be forthcoming, so check the Activities Calendar of the website and next month’s newsletter for updates. Enjoy.

December

December 9 (Monday) AT/BMT Loop from Springer parking lot north.
4.6 miles, moderate. This loop hike includes 1.2 miles on the Appalachian Trail and 3.4 on the Benton MacKaye Trail as well as the southern termini of both trails and two great vistas, one on each trail.

Hike leader Mike Pilvinsky. For more information, contact hikeleader@bmta.org.

December 16 (Monday) Cartecay Loop Trail.
DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). About 4 miles, easy to moderate difficulty. Much of the trail runs along the Cartecay River.

Hike leader Ken Cissna. For more information, contact hikeleader@bmta.org.

January

January 4 (Saturday) BMT Wilscot Gap to Iron Bridge at Shallowford Road.
7.8 miles, moderate. Beautiful views of mountains and Lake Blue Ridge. Some shuttle.

Hike Leader Tom Sewell. For more information, contact hikeleader@bmta.org.

January 13 (Monday) Select Trails of Talking Rock Nature Preserve.
DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). 4-5 miles, easy to easy-moderate.

Hike Leader: Ken Cissna. For more information, contact hikeleader@bmta.org.

January 18 (Saturday) Jarrard Gap Trail.
6.8 miles, moderate. A loop hike from Lake Winfield Scott up Jarrard Gap Trail to Bird Gap and then back down to Slaughter Creek Trail.

Hike leader: Larry Dumas. For more information, contact hikeleader@bmta.org.

February

February 10 (Monday) BMT from Three Forks to No Name Bald (and back).

DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). 4.3 miles, moderate. Mostly along Long Creek. Mostly uphill going and reverse returning. Approximately 700' of elevation change each way. We'll include a side trip to Long Creek Falls.

For more information, contact hikeleader@bmta.org.

February 14 (Friday) Wagon Train Trail – Brasstown Bald.

Co-sponsored with Georgia Forest Watch. 5 miles, easy-moderate. Two miles of gentle downhill to the overlook and back, plus up to the tower if we're feeling like that. Besides the views, we'll be hoping for the spectacular ice formations on the trailside cliffs (if temperatures cooperate). **This hike will be limited to the first 10 members to sign up from each group. To reserve your spot, RSVP ASAP. This hike fills up fast!**

Contact hike leaders Sue Harmon of GFW at suepharmon@gmail.com or 770-540-3672 or Ken Cissna of BMTA at hikeleader@bmta.org or 706-636-1741.

February 26-27 (Wednesday–Thursday) Hike Inn.

5 miles, moderate – each day. Overnight. BMTA members only.

Hike leader Ken Cissna. For more details, see story elsewhere in the newsletter or contact hikeleader@bmta.org



Save the Dates!

November 13-15, 2020

BMTA Hike Fest and Annual Meeting

Unicoi Lodge - Helen, GA

For reservations call (800) 573-9659.

To receive your discount -

Mention the Benton MacKaye Trail Association!

**The deadline for the January Newsletter is Wednesday, January 1.
Thank you!**