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**BMTA Headquarters**



# Benton MacKaye Trail Association

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## The Benton MacKaye Trail An Inspiration A Trail of Dreams

The 300-mile long Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT) itself began as the dream of Dave Sherman and five other founding members of the future association. Through the years, countless volunteers worked tirelessly to make that dream become a reality. In 2005, the Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA) celebrated the grand opening of the Benton MacKaye Trail!

I've met many hikers while hiking the BMT, and each had his or her story to tell. Some are drawn to the BMT by the challenge to reach the top of the mountain ... some just enjoy meandering through the lush forests. But for some, there is even more of a story to tell.

Shelly accompanied her father when he hiked the BMT in Georgia in the early nineties. Her memories of those hikes stuck with her. With the goal of hiking the entire trail, she and her family now enjoy backpacking/section hiking the BMT.

An avid hiker, Leo was in an auto accident. The doctors said he would never walk again. But, he had a goal ... to be back trekking through the woods on the trail he had come to love. He achieved that goal and now hikes/backpacks whenever he can get away from the demands of city life.

"There's something so special about hiking through the woods – I couldn't imagine not being able to reach the top of the 'world' again," said Leo.

James, who had been somewhat over-weight, had a heart attack. His doctors advised him to exercise to lose weight, but James found gyms and neighborhood jaunts boring. A friend invited James to hike with him on the BMT. One hike and James was hooked.

"It was so easy to lose the weight after that," said James. "There was so much to see – the views, the waterfalls, the spring flowers, the fall leaves. Hiking's a never-ending adventure with something new around every corner. The pounds just melted off. I wish I'd found it sooner."

In spite of this year's COVID-19 lockdowns, at least 21 hikers have achieved their dream of thru-hiking or section hiking the BMT and/or completing the BMT/AT Loop!



TJ's dad Tommy Pitts and TJ on Springer the night TJ finished his hike.

T.J. Pitts of Lakewood, Colorado, added the additional challenges of time and self-reliance to thru-hiking the trail.

An ultra runner, Pitts fell in love with the BMT while training on it for foot races in Georgia.

“My grandma has a cabin in the Cherry Log Community and the trail is maybe 75 yards from her front door. So I’ve been seeing those white diamond blazes for years.”

Pitts dreamed about setting a southbound speed record on the BMT. He also wanted to be self-reliant when doing it -- re-supply boxes would need to be dropped about every 50 miles.

The week of October 4 – 10, Pitts achieved his dream. Averaging 50 miles a day, Pitts traversed the almost 300-mile BMT in five days and 18 hours!

Whether your hike on the BMT is a dream, an inspirational goal or just an enjoyable day outdoors, the BMT offers something for everyone.

Next time you’re on the trail, take time to enjoy the woods. Take time to talk to those you encounter ... you may hear an interesting and inspiring story!

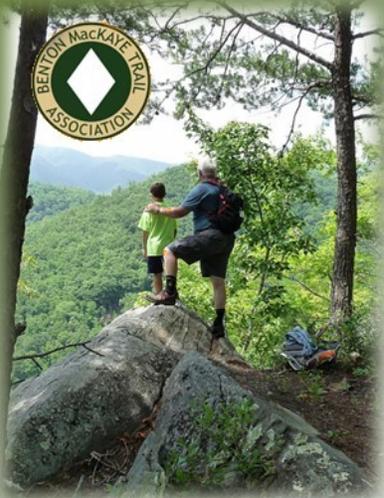
## Congratulations-Your Section is the Worst

by Kathy Williams



So I go to hike my Section 7a to see what Zeta had done. I live in the area and we had been without power for five and a half days. The EMC guys had told us, “You all on this mountain are all tore up.” He wasn’t talking about too many adult beverages. In the distance I heard chainsaws. Nothing new there, the sounds of chainsaws had been going on for days. I rounded a bend and there they were – dedicated BMTA Maintainers clearing my section. They congratulated me, “You have the worst section on the BMT!” Gee. They had been clearing since around 9 AM and had removed 30 something trees! Thank you!!! You are the best!!

## Time to Join or Renew Your Membership!



*-- Leave a footpath for generations to follow. --*

To Join or to Renew your membership, go to:

[Membership](#)

To Donate, go to:

[Donate](#)

*Membership fees & donations are the primary source of funds for preserving & protecting the BMT.*

*For a donation of \$50, \$100, \$250, \$500, you will receive an Individual or Family Membership for 2021.*

*Memberships purchased after October 1 will be good thru December 31, 2021.*

## Welcome to Our First 2021 BMTA Corporate Members!

The Benton MacKaye Trail Association is grateful for the help and support provided by our Corporate Members. When you visit one of these businesses, please identify yourself as a BMTA member and be sure to thank them for their support!



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## IT'S BACK! COME! Wilderness Wildlife Week Returns February 1-5, 2021

Daily guided hikes in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park in winter, programs on the outdoors and much more are associated with over a quarter century of the Wilderness Wildlife Week (WWW). This February 1-5, 2021 (Monday-Friday), it returns to Pigeon Forge, Tennessee again after cancelling in May 2020 due to the virus.

So come on back for a great five days together. This year the event will be hosted by Pigeon Forge's Ramsey Hotel and Convention Center. COVID 19 protocols will be strictly in place - masking when in close proximity, social distancing, etc. - required! Monday's opening day begins at 1:30 PM with signups immediately afterwards for the week's hikes and excursions.

The very first outdoor program of the entire week is on Monday. At 3:00 PM our club's George Owen will present an hour - long program on the Benton MacKaye Trail.

Go here to access [WWW information](#). Glance through the several pages of details. Use the section "Event Resource and Information Links" to acquire COVID-19 protocols, the daily event schedule of educational programs as well as hikes and excursions with signup information, etc.

The host facility, the [Ramsey Hotel and Convention Center](#), may be reached by phone at [865-428-2700](tel:865-428-2700) for room reservations. It's located at 3230 Parkway, Pigeon Forge, Tennessee 37863. There are no fees for classes or outings. NOTE FOR WWW RETURNEES: No events of the 2021 WWW will be at the LeConte Center.

### Special notes:

- ◆ Transportation from the Ramsey Center for hikes and excursions is by buses, free of charge. Buses are "virus sanitized" with personal virus precautions required by the city.
- ◆ The independent Winter Hike Week, previously a January event established when WWW moved to May, is canceled for 2021 so that all may support WWW.
- ◆ With the warming trend of recent decades winter hiking at lower elevations is very practical in the Smokies .
- ◆ Most restaurants in Pigeon Forge are open for your nightly meals and usually not crowded in winter.

So...be sure to reserve your room now - this is a popular event!



## Annual Meeting Hike: Swinging Bridge on the BMT

by Ken Cissna with photos courtesy of Liberty Murray

When we neared the spot where the Forest Service road exits GA-60 to complete our drive from Vogel to the Swinging Bridge parking area, we could see two sets of police cars with flashing blue lights, one on each side of the road where the BMT crosses the highway. Is the area closed, or maybe so full no more cars can enter? How will we find Mike Pilvinsky who is meeting us there? Nope.

Turns out that they were there for the Georgia Death Race. The Race is usually a 72 plus miler from Vogel to Amicalola State Park. The race this year had to be scaled down to 60 miles due to COVID-19 and was an in and out instead of point to point which kept runners on the trail into the dark. They were crossing the highway there and their race included the exact section of the BMT that our hike was scheduled for.

Although the parking area was beyond overflowing - not from the runners but from all the folks wanting to enjoy the day and take a short walk to the Toccoa River and the Swinging Bridge over the Toccoa River - we had no trouble finding Mike who had saved some parking spaces.

Besides the runners and the weekenders, we passed several groups of Boy Scouts who had camped at the bridge the previous night, hiked several miles south on the BMT during the day and were returning to their camping area.

The highlight of the hike was when one of the runners, a young woman, noticed the BMTA name and/or logo on all of our shirts and told us "My mom edits your newsletter." Yes, it was Liberty, Kathy Williams's oldest daughter from Spring Hill, Tennessee. She takes after Kathy, who enjoys triathlete competitions, marathons and other challenges like trying to keep up with George Owen on a hike. Unfortunately, Kathy was on the Wagon Train Hike at Brasstown that George Owen was leading and would not see Liberty until much later that night.



# A Snake in the Leaves! EEK!

by Martha Fowler

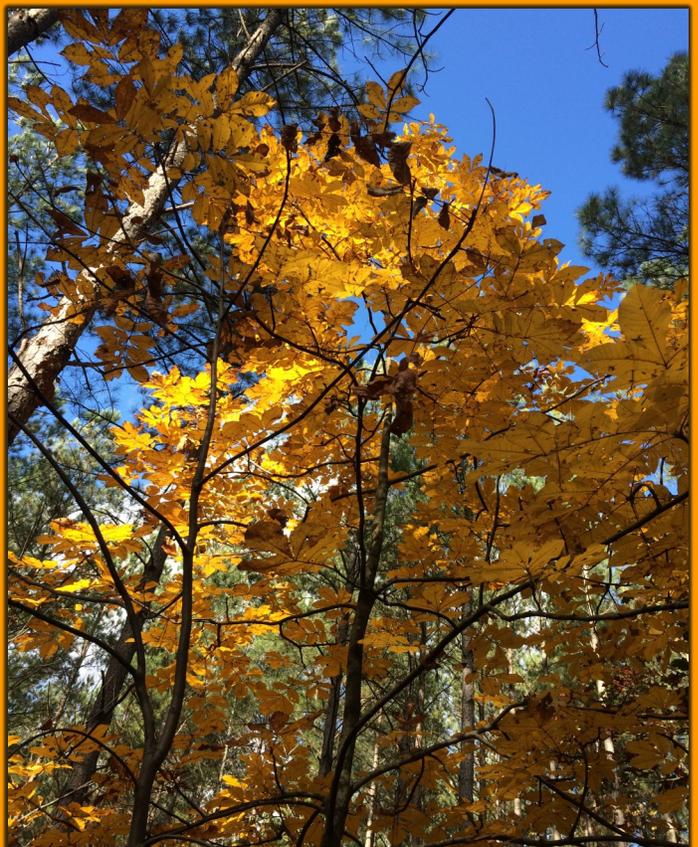
Nine of us hiked 4-1/2 miles at the Talking Rock Nature Preserve on November 10. There are numerous trails there for bikers and hikers of all levels. It was an unusually hot day for November - in the low 70's. Several of us walked up to the Apiary where live bees are kept - but didn't get too close! Very nice and well-maintained! Also, A black snake crossed our path on one of the trails! Overall, it was a fun day for all.



Are Jerry and Sara contemplating a second home in the forest?



Sara Bland, Bruce Rosenblum, Jerry Bland, Kathy Williams, Sue Ford, Emily Matthews, Roberta Withlow and Debbie Tew. Photo by Martha Fowler.



The brilliance of Fall!

## November 14 GA Work Trip

by Bob Cowdrick with photos by David Lankford

The remains of tropical storm Zeta caused considerable damage to the BMT in Georgia. We quickly pivoted from our planned workday project to this new higher priority project: to clear the blowdowns from the trail.

The focus was on sections 1, 6 and 7. These sections see a significant number of weekend hikers, so the effort was much appreciated by the many individuals we met while working there on Saturday.

Gilbert Treadwell led a small crew to remove four trees on Section 1 (Springer Mountain to Three Forks). Ken Cissna led another crew hiking from Falls Branch Falls Section 6a to Rich Mountain cutting out 18 blow-downs. Barry Allen's crew worked Weaver Creek Section 6d south to Rich Mountain wrangling 31 trees off the trail. Dave Ricker's crew tackled Section 7a and tallied 13.

In total 33 BMTA volunteers, expending 247 total hours of effort were able to remove 66 trees. An outstanding job!

Our December 12 workday will involve a renovation of a historic trail boardwalk on Section 2a north of the Three Forks trailhead. Come join us for a special celebration and learn about the history. Go [HERE](#) to sign up.



## BMTA Members' Photos Chosen



BMTA members Clare Sullivan and Rick Harris showcased their considerable photographic skills in the Polk County Chamber of Commerce Photo Calendar Contest.

Clare's photo of the bridge over Coker Creek on the BMT/John Muir Trail won an Honorable Mention and will be used on social media sites.

Rick's photo of the Appalachia Powerhouse will also be seen on Polk County social media.

Well done!!



### 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!

## Caney Creek Settlement Trail Rehab Eagle Service Project

by Richard Harris

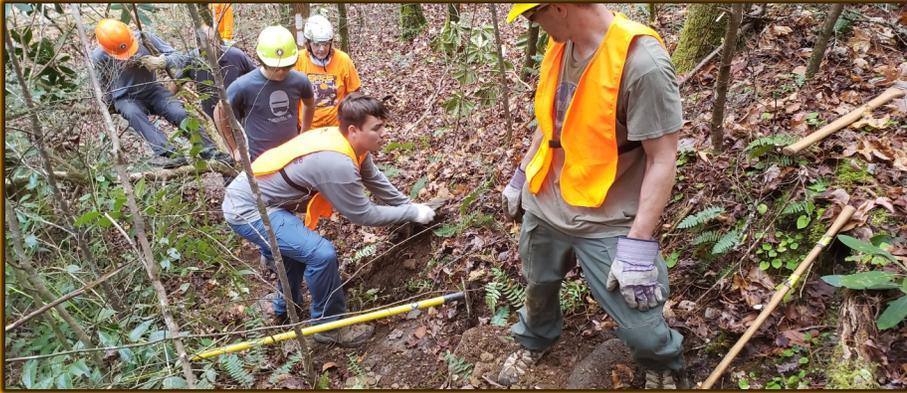
A year ago the Cherokee Hiking Club (CHC) attempted to hike the trail to the Caney Creek Settlement along the Ocoee River. We made it all the way, but the trail was in horrible condition, poorly marked and we got temporarily discombobulated (off track) twice. It is an amazing place. The village housed the families of the Tennessee Power Company employees who built and maintained the flume and powerhouse. It was a little town with no vehicles, but with a water system, electricity, a hotel, school, church house, tennis courts, flower gardens, fish ponds and a train track in the front yards. The only way out was across a swinging bridge or by boat. Eventually the Tennessee Power Company, which provided the first electric power to Cleveland and Chattanooga, was bought out by TVA and the village was abandoned.

Move forward several months. I was approached by Kevin Fryar, a Boy Scout from Troop 44 in Cleveland, asking about the possibilities for an Eagle Scout Project in the National Forest. Kevin is a member of the Scout Troop for which CHC member Jennifer Schroll volunteers as an adult leader. Kevin and I thought of several possibilities but settled on rehabbing the Caney Creek Trail #74. After obtaining the necessary approvals from the USFS and the Cherokee BSA Council, we made definitive plans. To begin with, I and Debbie Moore (CHC member, President of the Tennessee Trail of Tears Association and local historian on the village) attended a troop meeting in early November. I presented the various tools we would use to clear the trail and discussed the project. Debbie gave a slide presentation on the history of the village.

The work trip came to fruition on a beautiful, somewhat warm Saturday in November. Six members of our Thursday Tellico/Ocoee Trail Crew (myself, Brenda Harris, Bobby Mitchell, Barb Childress, Will Dostie, and Tom Smith) joined with 19 Scouts and Leaders from Troop 44 and 444 to make it happen. The Wednesday before, Clare Sullivan and I re-blazed the trail to make sure none of the trail crew and/or future hikers would get lost while working on or hiking the trail. On the day of the work trip, we first had a tailgate safety meeting, then broke into three crews. One crew used chainsaws (Tom Smith and myself) and hand saws (led by Brenda Harris and Bobby Mitchell) to clear about 70 trees off the trail. The second crew (led by Barb Childress) used loppers and swing blades to clear all the vegetation from the trail corridor. The third crew (led by Will Dostie, Jennifer Schroll and other adult leaders from the Scout Troop) used digging tools to repair several hundred feet of tread.

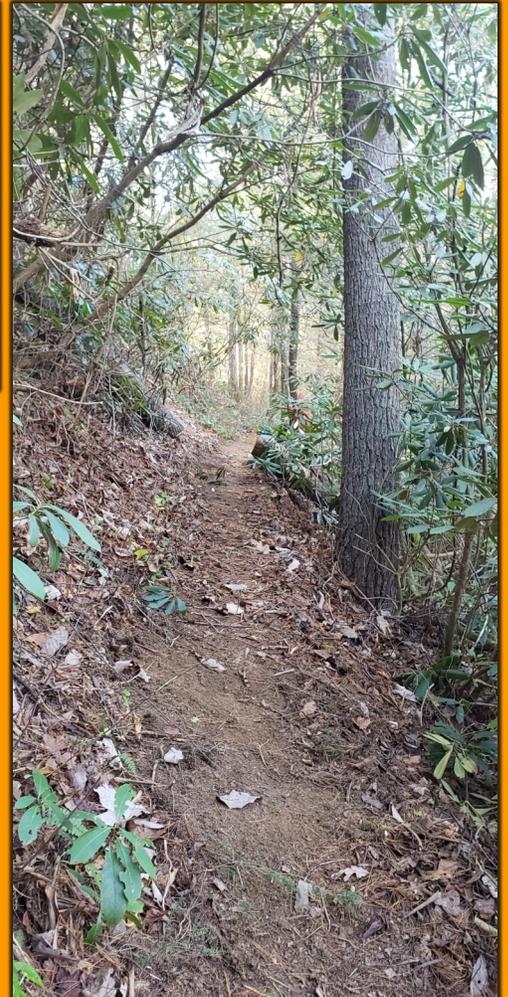


Continued next page



We finished the work by 2 PM. We then crossed Big Creek and explored the remnants of the old Caney Creek Village. We re-crossed the creek and returned to our vehicles by about 5 PM. It was a great work trip and Eagle Scout Project. The work done by the Scouts was exemplary. Everyone worked hard and had a lot of fun doing it. Whenever it is held I hope to attend Kevin's Eagle Ceremony. Marci Spencer, BMTA member and author of books on local National Forests, may include a chapter on this project in the book she is writing on the Cherokee National Forest.

The trail is now open for hiking with a clear, well-marked corridor, though hikers and hiking groups need to be aware of the dates of closure of the Pace Gap Gate. For protection of the wildlife the gate is CLOSED June 1 to August 30 and January 1 to March 14 . During hunting season in the fall, be sure to wear orange and nothing white. You don't want to be mistaken for a deer!



# BMTA Trail Section Maintainer Blowdown Measurer

by Bob Cowdrick



You are scouting your section looking for trail hazards and maintenance needs.



You come across a blowdown that needs to be reported to the Maintenance Director.



How wide or what is the diameter of this tree?  
Did you bring your tape measurer?  
Will you just guess at the diameter?  
Why not bring a measuring string? It is small, lightweight, convenient and fits in your pocket.



If you brought your measuring string you'll be able to quickly measure the tree diameter.



How does one create a measuring string?  
Cut a piece of string (or a thin rope) 27 inches long or more. Add knots at 0, 2, 4, 12 and 24 inches. The knots take up some of the string. That is why you may need 27 inches. You can trim the string after adding the knots. Color the knots with a permanent marker for differentiation if you desire.



By stretching the string across the tree using a combination of the knots and lengths you will now be able to measure blowdowns with a wide range of diameters. Add this measuring string to your BMTA backpack or your pocket. With this lightweight, convenient measuring device, you will be able to report accurate diameter measurements to the Maintenance Director for trees that need to be removed from the trail.

## I'd Rather Hike the Mountain Before Me Than the One behind Me

by Patrick "Patman" Ward

The year 2020 started off with me telling my dearest friend, my wife – “This is 2020...the year of good, clear vision.” In numerous ways this is exactly as it has turned out. Despite and perhaps because of the numerous challenges faced, all of us should be able to say we have learned to focus more on the important aspects of life and less on the trivial. Personally, this year, I experienced unexpected struggles – a furlough from work, reduced daily personal contact and my mother passed on to glory. Yet I was granted so many wonderful opportunities along with the curveballs to regain my focus, to serve and enjoy in this fantastic life we live. Did I mention COVID-19? When the impact of that horrific aspect of daily life was introduced, I really knew this was going to be a different kind of year! Determined not to be completely daunted or defeated, I went “to work” more at home, did some awesome backpacking, found deeper joy in maintaining the BMT and experienced new ways to connect with people.

Backpacking is a passion of mine. In similar fashion to other hobbies I must restrain myself lest other parts of and people in my life are neglected. For nearly two decades I have been section hiking the AT. In fact, I have made it as far as Vermont (in 2019) from Georgia (in 2002). This year, 2020, would be different and now (in retrospect) I see that in a good way. With long distance travel becoming inadvisable I decided to focus closer to home on the BMT. The first thought was “can I even backpack on the BMT?” Trails were being shut down with portions of our beloved trail having sectional restrictions and limitations. In April before the work furlough kicked in, I needed to get in the woods and clear my head. A solo, pleasant one-night round trip from McKenny Gap to Holloway Gap campground was just the ticket. Then I realized I really want to share the wilderness experiences with people, now more than ever. After all, solitude is nice, but it is one of the pursuits you cannot really share with anyone. In the months that followed spring through the summer and into the fall, I would enjoy just such shared adventures on the BMT. Along with two weekend-long, overnight maintenance trips with a number of our awesome trail maintainers, I had four backpacking trips with friends and family.

First Nelson Ashbrook joined me for a three-day trip from Thunder Rock Campground to McKenny Gap in April. We had very pleasant weather to accompany some long, rewarding days on the BMT. Nelson was great company and conversation as we traversed some beautiful countryside with exceptional spring views. Then in May my daughter, Helen, and I repeated the over-night round trip from McKenny Gap to Holloway Gap. Helen, while still young, is a wonderful companion and very solid backpacker. We had a very pleasant night camping along side two other backpackers and their two dogs. As we hiked the trail, we also met several other over-nighters including a father and young son who were on their very first backpacking trip together. I found their story very encouraging because they chose the BMT for this time together.



Sunset on the BMT below Hemp Top.



Nelson considering the day ahead on the BMT.

July brought my son, Jack home on “block leave” while serving in the US Army at Ft. Bragg and he wanted some time in the woods to relax. Jack and I took a three-day trip, backpacking all the Jacks River Trail and then connecting homebound on the BMT, finishing at McKenny Gap. We had a fantastic last night in the woods at Holloway Gap - which by the way, is an excellent camping spot. I camped there four times this year!

Finally, in October my buddy, Shane and I found ourselves NO-BO from Springer Mountain to McKenny Gap on a five-day backpacking trip. For me this completed backpacking all the GA Sections of the BMT in 2020. For Shane it made him “get the bug” and he plans to someday thru-hike all of our wonderful BMT.



“Patman” and Shane on Springer Mountain.

I must give a shout-out to the Iron Bridge Café where we not only enjoyed a hardy breakfast on day three, but we also picked up our resupply boxes they graciously stored for us. The hiking with Shane was refreshing and we met two pairs of SOBO thru-hikers who were within a couple of days of completing their trek at Springer.

It was on this trip while climbing another peak that I declared to Shane - “I’d Rather Hike the Mountain before Me than the One behind Me”- perhaps an appropriate metaphor as we reflect on how the year 2020 has transpired.

All in all, I trust you’ll see, sharing the trail with family, friends and future friends has been rewarding - even in the midst of a challenging year. I am incredibly grateful for the BMT (a huge thank you to the maintainers!) and for what it offers in the way of a place to hike, work, backpack, socialize, deepen relationships and rejuvenate the mind, body and soul. You should try it!



“Patman and Helen at Fowler Mountain.



Jack in Jacks River, one of 40+ crossings.



“Patman” and Shane “enjoy” a break at Payne Gap.

## Burned Those Turkey Day Calories!

by Clare Sullivan

It was a gorgeous Saturday after Thanksgiving when 14 BMTA members and two guests burned pie and potato calories working on the trail. We brushed, sawed, blazed and lopped from Kimsey Highway to Lost Creek Campground. We were delighted to have two guests join us, Burgan Craig of Chattanooga, Tennessee and Bryan Croft of Neptune Beach, Florida. We also were honored to have four BMTA Presidents among our group - George Owen, Steve Cartwright, David Blount and Ken Cissna. This proves our presidents are very dedicated individuals. Ken Cissna, gave a “Presidential Pardon” to an unusually curved tree that was about to be cut! We celebrated Judy Norton’s adoption of Section 12c by teaching her to blaze and swamp. Steve Barnes, a new member of BMTA, did a terrific job putting in three steps on the tread. Six hikers passed as we were working, all very appreciative of the work being done.



New member Steve Barnes making steps.



Four BMTA Presidents came out to volunteer on the trail.

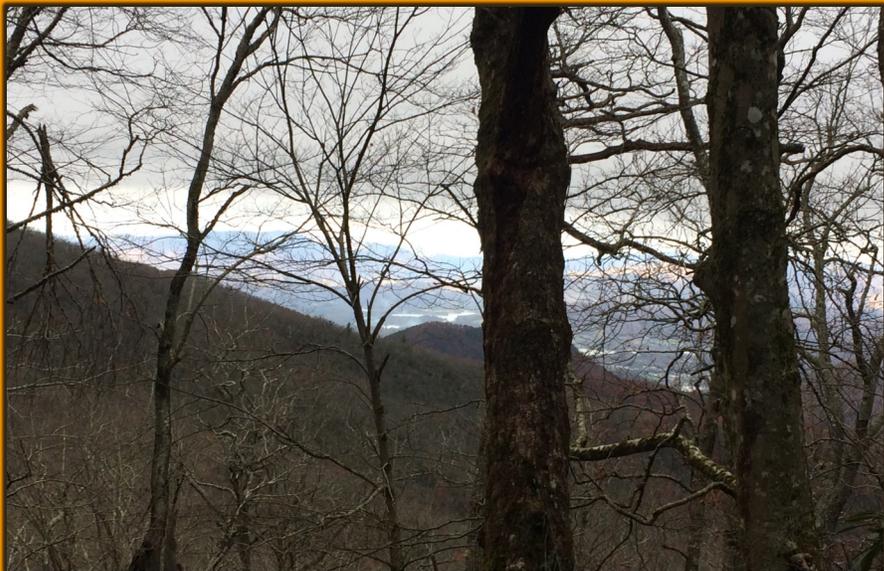


Socializing six feet apart after working.

# Wagon Train Trail Hike Photo Story



George Owen points out a Yellow Birch.



Lakes gleam in the distance.



Fall Finery

## Three Trek BMT and "Trail of Tears"

by George Owen

It was a nice late-autumn day on Sunday, November 22, but only three came out for this official BMTA hike in southeastern Tennessee. Greg Redman, a member from Cleveland, Tennessee, and Kathy Williams, our newsletter editor from Blue Ridge, Georgia, joined hike leader George Owen for this outing.

Meeting in our usual spot at 9 AM at the old Piggly Wiggly in Ducktown, we virus-conscious drivers zipped up TN 68 to the Joe Brown Highway and the little parking lot above the old Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp. We then tramped the connector into the Unicoi Gap Trail and did a portion of the old wagon road that was a part of the "Trail of Tears" Native American removal in the late 1830s. Along the way the leader shared the tragic history of this event. We also took in the remains of the CCC camp and visited the grave of the Civil War soldier.



At the CCC Camp ruins you can still see where the creek had been fortified with a rock wall. Just above, on the bank is a foundation stone.



Gravestone of Hamp Dotson, killed in the Civil War.



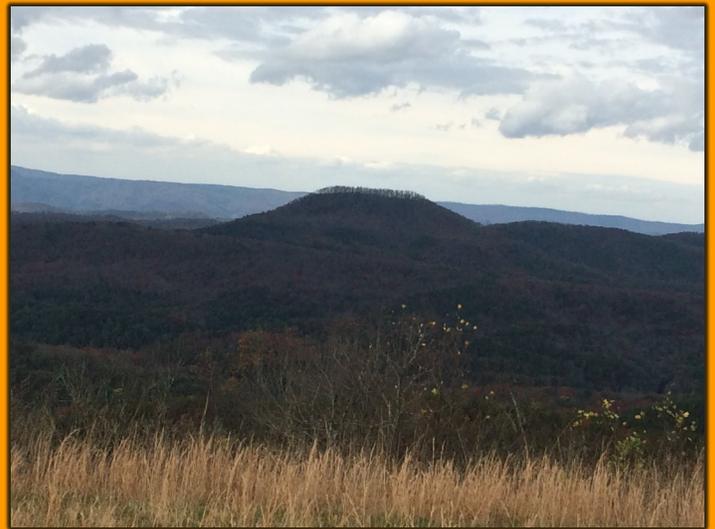
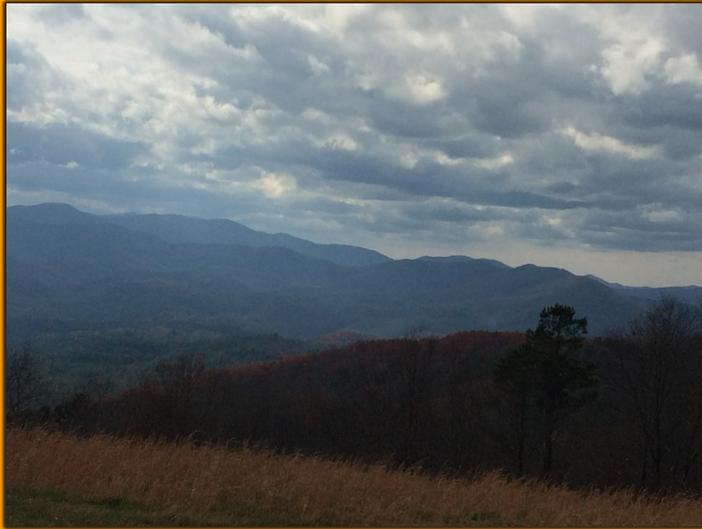
George and Greg at the border of Tennessee and North Carolina.

We then drove to three additional hiking sites. First, at Unicoi Gap, we hiked out and back a ways westward on the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT).

Then we drove to the top of scenic Buck Bald for that awesome 360-degree vista to enjoy our noon hour lunches while taking in the mountain scenery in every direction.

Next we hiked in-and-out both directions on the BMT - from the gap below Buck Bald. Going west we walked out to the start of the main downhill to TN 68. Then going northeast we did over two miles each way to hook up with where we hiked in the morning from Unicoi Gap.

As leader I had intended this to be about a five-mile hike, but it turned out being over eight miles, according to a GPS! (Kathy's recorded 8.6 miles. Hmm.)



Lunch at Buck Bald made even better with the panoramic views!



“Wanna go a little further? It’s only about 20 more minutes.” This was said about four times by Intrepid George.

George hugging a tree on Buck Bald towards the end of the hike. “Uh, George, will we be out of the woods by dark?”

The trek ended about 4 PM and all should have been home by dark. (Actually George, we got out at 4:52 PM per Kathy).

The leader of this hike wishes to express his sheer delight of the trekkers and the hike itself. He really enjoyed getting to know Greg, and also to learn more about Kathy, and just sharing the pleasant company of both of them.

Musings from Kathy.....

A George Owen mile is not the same as recognized by international measuring standards. Neither is a George Owen minute. However, he will get you out of the woods by dark if you are able to maintain an Owen Pace. The history you will learn is amazing!

## BMTA Corporate Members

The Benton MacKaye Trail Association is grateful for the help and support provided by our Corporate Members. When you visit one of these businesses, please identify yourself as a BMTA member and be sure to thank them for their support!

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THE DUCKTOWN COPPER INN  
<https://www.theducktowncopperinn.com/location>

## Upcoming Hikes and Work Trips

by Tom Sewell, Hiking Director

BMTA normally schedules four or five hikes per month, some “leisure” hikes that are shorter and easier and some five to eight miles and of moderate difficulty. 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. Some, but not all, of our hikes are “dog friendly.” Although more hikes are in Georgia than the other states, you will find hikes in all three BMT states: Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee.

These, however, are not normal times. Because hiking in the out-of-doors is good for one’s mental and physical health, we encourage BMTA members and others to continue hiking as much as possible during this national health crisis *and to do so safely*. To that end, we are continuing our hiking program and welcome people to hike with us. In the interests of safety, we have instituted some modifications that you need to know about:

1. **Only hikes that do not require shuttles are allowed** under the auspices of BMTA.
2. All hikers must drive to the meeting place and trailhead in their own cars -- no carpooling except among family members.
3. Any potential hiker who is feeling ill, has traveled within the past 14 days to a location with a significant number of cases of the novel corona virus (COVID-19) or has been exposed within the past 14 days to a person who has been confirmed as or is even suspected of having COVID-19 must not come on a hike.
4. All hikes are limited to 10 participants —hike leaders may impose even lower limits.
5. Before, during and after a hike, participants must maintain an appropriate social distance from one another (an absolute minimum of six feet—but ten, fifteen or twenty is much better).

The hikes for the remainder of the year are listed below. Winter hiking provides spectacular views. You should find plenty to enjoy in the hikes below. More hikes will be forthcoming, so check the Activities Calendar of the website, BMTA’s Facebook page, our various email alerts and next month’s newsletter for updates. Enjoy.

### December

**December 7 (Monday)** AT: Woody Gap to Gooch Gap and back.

7.2 miles, moderate. Two nice viewpoints.

Hike Leader: Steve Dennison. For more information, contact [hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org).

**December 8 (Tuesday)** Selected trails of Boling Park (Canton).

5-8 miles, easy to moderate.

Hike Leader Darcy Douglas. For more information, contact [hikeleaderDD@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderDD@bmtamail.org).

**December 11 (Friday)** Piney Knob Trail.

5.5 miles, moderate.

Hike Leader: Evelyn Yarns. For more information, contact [hikeleaderEY@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderEY@bmtamail.org).



**December 12 (Saturday) GA Work Trip** Section 2a/Three Forks – Long Creek Boardwalk Renovation.  
To RSVP contact Bob Cowdrick [GAMaintDirector@bmtamail.org](mailto:GAMaintDirector@bmtamail.org).

**December 14 (Monday) BMT/AT:** From Three Forks northbound up AT to just past Hickory Falls Cemetery and back. Dog-Friendly Hike (adult humans may bring a leashed dog).  
5 miles, moderate.  
Hike Leader Ken Cissna. For further information, contact [hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org).

**December 16 (Wednesday) BMT:** John Muir Trail to the Narrows.  
5 miles, moderate.

We'll start with a beautiful view from the swinging bridge that crosses the Hiwassee River at the Appalachia Powerhouse. The hike will be to a treasure, The Narrows, a deep narrow gorge through which the old riverbed flows is full of fascinating rock formations and Ruth's Golden Asters (in the fall). You'll want to drop your pack and explore! Be prepared for water crossings. Hiking sticks recommended. Bring snack/lunch and water.  
Hike Leader: Clare Sullivan. For more information, contact [hikeleaderCS2@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderCS2@bmtamail.org).



**December 19 TN/NC Work Trip** Sections 12a-b, Ocoee River to Kimsey Hwy, log and brush out. To RSVP contact Ralph Van Pelt [RVanp45246@aol.com](mailto:RVanp45246@aol.com).

**December 28 (Monday) AT:** Dicks Creek Gap south to Kelly Knob and return by way of Deep Gap Shelter.  
9 miles, moderately strenuous.  
Hike Leader Steve Dennison. For more information, contact [hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org).

## January

**January 1 (Friday) BMT/AT** Loop from Big Stamp Gap. Start the New Year off right with a hike. 5 miles, moderate hike, three minor creek crossings. Trip will include viewpoints of Springer Mountain and Owen Vista. Hike Leader Mike Pilvinsky. For more information, contact [hikeleaderMP@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderMP@bmtamail.org).

**January 5 (Monday) BMT** from Hwy 60 to the iconic Swinging Bridge over the Toccoa River and return for 7 moderate miles. Hike Leader Steve Dennison. For more information, contact [hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org).

**January 8 (Friday) Talking Rock Nature Preserve.** A Dog Friendly Hike (adult humans may bring a leashed dog) utilizing the various loops in the Talking Rock Nature Preserve. We plan 5 easy miles but you may decide to add more if you wish after the hike. Hike Leader Ken Cissna. For more information, contact [hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org).



**January 9 GA Work Trip** Sections 1a, 1b and 1c — Springer Mountain >> Three Forks. Brushing, Lopping, Tread Improvement, Water Bar Cleanout.  
To RSVP contact Bob Cowdrick [GAMaintDirector@bmtamail.org](mailto:GAMaintDirector@bmtamail.org).

**January 13** (Wednesday) Blue Ridge Aska Road trails. 4 easy miles on the Green Mountain, the Connector and Long Branch trails. Hike Leader Martha Fowler. For more information, contact [hikeleaderMF@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderMF@bmtamail.org).

**January 17** (Sunday) BMT/Duncan Ridge to Rhodes Mountain. Are you ready for a little challenge? 2 miles up with 1200 feet elevation change but it's downhill on the return. We might add a mile on the Duncan Ridge if desired. Total of 4 strenuous miles. Great views along the way. Hike Leader Tom Sewell. For more information, contact [hikeleaderTS@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderTS@bmtamail.org).

**January 20** (Wednesday) Hemptop to Spanish Oak Gap then BMT to Jacks River Trail. 5.8 easy miles. In the Cohuttas west of Blue Ridge. Then proceed to Jacks River crossing but stop and return to our vehicles at Dally Gap. Hike Leader Carolyn Sewell. For more information, contact [hikeleaderCS@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderCS@bmtamail.org).

**January 22** (Friday) Brush Creek Trail. To celebrate his 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday he's leading a hike! Easy 5 miles with lots of views of the reservoir of the Ocoee River above the Whitewater Center in Ducktown, Tennessee. Hike Leader Howard Baggett. For more information, contact [hikeleaderHB@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderHB@bmtamail.org).



**January 23 (Saturday) TN Work Trip**  
Location and contact information TBA.

**January 29** (Friday) BMT Bushy Head Gap to Hudson Gap and back. Four Season Hike Series -Winter. A Dog Friendly Hike (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). 5.2 moderate miles. We're going to offer this relatively short and fairly easy hike during each season this year. Come out and see great long-distance views this time, wild flowers in the spring, green and hot in the summer and beautiful colors in the fall. Hike Leader Ken Cissna. For more information, contact [hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org).



Congratulations to Mary Alton and Anne Anderson on their first maintenance trip. They became Section Maintainers!



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**Membership**



The deadline for the January Newsletter is December 30.  
Thanks!