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### BMTA Officers 2021-2022

President:	Ken Cissna
Vice President:	Clare Sullivan
Secretary:	Patrick Ward
Treasurer:	Lydia Burns
GA M/C:	Bob Cowdrick
TN/NC M/C:	Keith Mertz
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Hiking Director:	Tom Sewell
Store:	Sue Ricker
Membership:	Frank Forehand
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Conservation:	Dave Ricker
Past President:	Barry Allen
Newsletter:	Kathy Williams
State Rep GA:	Darcy Douglas
State Rep TN/NC:	Steve Barnes



**BMTA Headquarters**



# Benton MacKaye Trail Association

VOLUME 38, ISSUE 12

DECEMBER 2021

## Meeting, Hiking, Hot Chocolate and S'mores!

by Joy Forehand with photos courtesy of Brenda Harris

The Benton MacKaye Trail Association's Annual Meeting and Hike Fest was held November 11-13, 2021, at Unicoi Lodge in Helen, GA. Attendees loved the great selection of 17 hikes, including the Swinging Bridge, Raven Cliff Falls, Anna Ruby Falls and more, that kept attendees busy during the day.



The Friday Nite Social featured complimentary hors d'oeuvres and a uniquely delicious hot chocolate with s'mores for the finishing touch.

The election of officers for fiscal 2022 was held at the Meeting of the Membership on Saturday. Among those elected were: President, Ken Cissna of Cherry Log, GA; Vice President, Clare Sullivan of Copperhill, TN; Secretary, Patrick Ward of Senoia, GA; and Treasurer, Lydia Burns of Crawfordville, FL.

At the business meeting, the spotlight was on the Benton MacKaye (BMTA) Board of Director's decision to seek Congressional approval to have the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT) designated as the 12th National Scenic Trail. To date, only 11 long-distance trails have received the prestigious designation – the Appalachian Trail being the first.

“These trails epitomize the splendor, diversity and historical significance found in the wide array of the American landscape and the BMT has it all,” said Cissna. “We have a lot of work ahead of us and we’re going to need a lot of grassroots support.” (See page [six](#) of this newsletter to learn how to contact your representative).



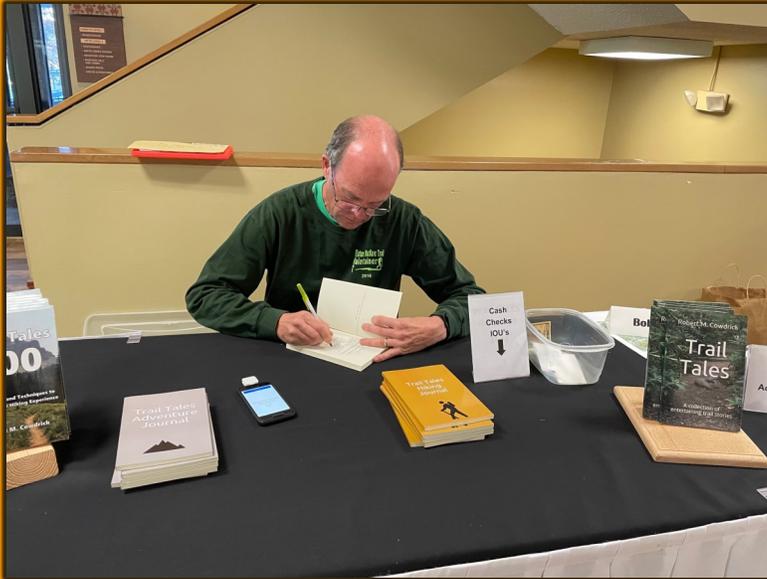
Apropos for the celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the BMTA, Larry Anderson, author of *Benton MacKaye: Conservationist, Planner, and Creator of the Appalachian Trail (Creating the North American Landscape)*, was the keynote speaker.



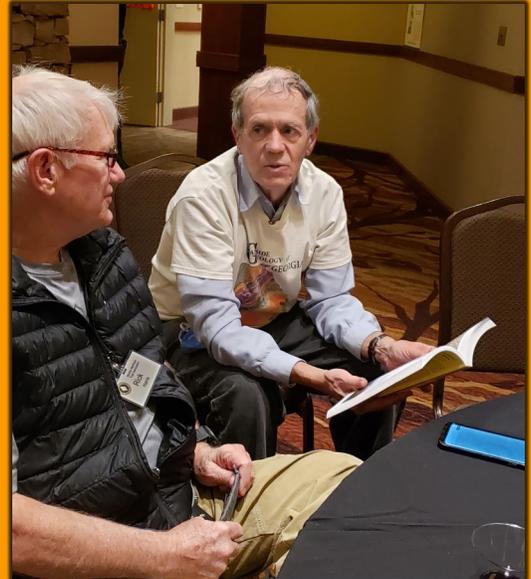
The Annual Meeting Raffle and Silent Auction brought in \$2,150 for BMTA's Land Acquisition Fund! Ken Cissna submitted the winning bid for the beautiful handmade BMTA quilt designed and created by Cathy Pilvinsky.

Popular prizes with the raffle winners were gifts certificates or the donation of one or two-nite stays at: Charit Creek Lodge, Fireside Outpost, Fontana Village, Len Foote Hike Inn, the Historic Tapoco Lodge and Unicoi Lodge. Also popular were five beautiful trail signs created by Ralph Heller, Starr Mountain Outfitters' donation of a backpack and Nalgene bottle, a beautiful red and white Christmas wreath designed by Debra Guhl and an autographed copy of Bob Cowdrick's book *Trail Tales*.

This also was BMTA's first ever book signing event. Authors included Larry Anderson, Bob Cowdrick, Rick Harris, Jess Riddle, Marci Spencer and Bill Witherspoon.



**Bob Cowdrick even accepted IOU's!**



**Rick Harris and Larry Anderson**



Terry Miller of Suwanee, GA, was recognized for his long-time service as webmaster of the "old" website that was replaced a year or so ago. Miller currently is the webmaster for BMTA's Documents and Forms website.

Everyone attending the meeting received a BMT Diamond Blaze Beanie, a commemorative Christmas Ornament made by Debra and Phil Guhl and a gift certificate from FarOut (formerly Guthook).



Barry Allen of Suwanee, GA, was presented the Volunteer of the Year Award. From trail maintenance to leading hikes to volunteering at festivals, Allen has done it all. He served as Georgia's Maintenance Director for four years followed by a two-year stint as president of the association. He currently serves on the Board as the Immediate Past President and is a member of the National Scenic Trails Committee.

Gilbert Treadwell of Blue Ridge, GA, was presented the Trail Worker of the Year Award. Rick Harris of Tellico Plains, TN, was presented the Distinguished Service Award. In the 40-year history of the association, only five other members have received the prestigious award.

Connor Bayliss of Macon, GA, received a Solo Stove (donated by Steve Mullen of Blairsville, GA) as the trail worker with the most backpacking hours doing trail maintenance.

Nine hike leaders received a 2021 Hike Leader T-Shirt. Click [Here](#) for a complete list of the Hike Leaders.

Sixty-three trail workers earned the 2021 30-Hour Maintainer's T-Shirt. The orange shirts with the Maintainer's logo were reminiscent of the very first 30-Hour T-Shirts presented in 2012. See [T-Shirt Winners](#).

Twenty-nine trail workers joined the 2021 100-Hour Club. First-time 100-Hour Club members received a BMT Maintainer's Jacket. Those who received a jacket in previous years were given an REI Gift Certificate. [See 100-Hours Club](#).



Who are these people?!?! Run for the hills!!!



Dave Sherman was awarded a stunning framed view of the Swinging Bridge.



George Owen is obviously up to no good!!



Cindy Ward and Sue Ricker handled the BMTA store.





### **Help BMTA Succeed in Its Quest to Become the 12<sup>th</sup> National Scenic Trail**

Please contact your member of Congress to explain why YOU think the BMT should become a National Scenic Trail. In most cases you will need to know your ZIP+4 extension.

To find your ZIP+4, type “zip code lookup” in your browser. Use “Find by Address”. Note your ZIP+4.

Then type [house.gov](http://house.gov) in your browser.

In the “FIND YOUR REPRESENTATIVE” search box (top right), enter your ZIP+4.

Select your representative’s name (near your representative’s picture on the left).

Select “CONTACT” (usually in the top menu bar).

To send an email, follow the instructions for completing the form — fill in name, address, phone, email address, etc.)

Be sure to click the “*I’m not a robot*” option when it appears!

If you get a response “*the address you entered could not be found in our database*”, it may be because you are not a registered voter in that district. Perhaps it is your vacation home. Emails are deleted if they are not from constituents.

You may need to choose your “issue of concern”. If so, choose “Other” and enter: “National Scenic Trail”.

Then enter your comments. Suggested topics include:

- ◆ Becoming a National Scenic Trail will bring an economic boost to communities near the trail.
- ◆ Thousands of hikers use the Benton MacKaye Trail every year.
- ◆ Scenic vistas, spectacular waterfalls and bubbling streams highlight the hikers’ journey as they enjoy the wide array of wildflowers in the spring, the emerald-green forest of summer, the colorful fall leaves or an exquisite winter wonderland.
- ◆ Hikers and their families will patronize local campgrounds, restaurants, lodging, shuttles, outdoor retailers, etc.
- ◆ The 740-member Benton MacKaye Trail Association has a 40-year history of maintaining the 288-mile-long Benton MacKaye Trail.
- ◆ The trail is complete — it has just 15 miles of road walk remaining.
- ◆ This would be good for the breath-taking natural landscapes that encompass the BMT and at the same time, would be a boon to the local economies. I encourage you to support this issue.

If you’re willing to go the extra mile for BMTA (and to give a few more minutes and a stamp), please consider ALSO writing a personal note to your member of Congress. We’re told that sometimes those have even more impact than email messages. If you are willing to do this, please send your note to:

The Honorable (Insert the Name of your Representative)  
 521 Cannon House Office Building  
 Washington, DC 20515

## Richard Harris BMTA Distinguished Service Award



At the Benton MacKaye Trail Association's Annual Meeting Awards Ceremony held November 13, 2021, at Unicoi Lodge in Helen, GA, Tellico Plains resident Rick Harris was presented the Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA) Distinguished Service Award. In the 40-year history of the association, only five other members have received the prestigious award.

A member of the association since 2005, Harris has served as both the TN/NC Maintenance Director and as the State Representative for Tennessee – he was the TN/NC Maintenance Director for 2021.

“The 288-mile-long Benton MacKaye Trail is a great wilderness hiking trail extending from Springer Mountain in Georgia to the northern end of the Smokies,” said Harris. “It’s named after Benton MacKaye who first proposed the Appalachian Trail in 1921. Today, the BMT’s route closely resembles MacKaye’s proposed spur route into north central Georgia.”

As a youth, Harris’ parents and his Scoutmaster were enthusiastic hikers who instilled in Harris a love for hiking and the outdoors. While at the University of Virginia for college and medical school, Harris continued in Scouting, going on to become the Scoutmaster of a local Scout troop.

When he was preparing for his future career in medicine, Scouting and outdoor activities slipped to the sidelines. Harris became the Director of the Bone Marrow Transplant Program and the Bone Marrow Failure Clinic at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, where he was employed for 35 years.

He returned to Scouting when his children followed in his footsteps as Cub and Boy Scouts and was a Scoutmaster of their troop for over 20 years. Today Harris encourages Scout Troops to join a BMT work trip where they gain an education in trail maintenance while accomplishing much-needed work on the trail.

Originally from Chattanooga and a Baylor School prep school graduate, when retirement beckoned, Harris and his wife, Brenda, returned to the wilds of Tennessee. The Harris’ joined the Cherokee Hiking Club (CHC) where he met Ken Jones and other avid trail maintainers. Jones encouraged Rick to join the Tellico/Ocoee Volunteer Trail Crew and later, the BMTA Maintenance Team.

“I learned about trail maintenance by ‘doing’,” said Harris. “Ken and others were great teachers and I signed onto both teams”. On Thursdays, you’ll find Harris, along with 10-15 other dedicated trail maintainers, working on the BMT as well as other local trails in the Cherokee National Forest.

Harris is the Long-Distance Hiking Trail Representative for the Tennessee Greenways and Trails Council of the State of Tennessee (TDEC) which provides support for all of the trails in Tennessee. Recognizing the need for disseminating “how to” information for trail construction and trail maintenance, Harris worked with Joanne Mitchell, the Horse Trails Rep and Mike Riter, the developer of the Trail Ed course for the Southern Off Road Bicycle Association, to create a four-day course for trail construction and maintenance.

As hike leaders and shuttle drivers for hikers on the BMT, Harris and his wife Brenda are enthusiastic ambassadors for the BMTA.

“We bring quite a few interesting people home with us,” said Brenda. “We’ve brought many very tired and very thirsty hikers as well as a few injured hikers home for a good night’s rest.”

Through the years, Harris has completed many projects for the BMTA, including compiling and editing BMTA’s *Georgia Guide*, *TN/NC Guide* and *The Smokies Guide*. His current project is *Great Hikes and Backpack Trips near Tellico Plains, TN*. He also is heavily involved in a revision of Will Skelton’s book *Cherokee National Forest Hiking Guide*, editing the sections on trails in the Tellico and Ocoee Ranger Districts.

A self-taught cartographer, Harris designed BMTA’s bandana which features a map of the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT). He also created the artwork for BMTA’s new Diamond Blaze Beanie as well as most of the BMTA’s T-shirts.

“Whatever I do, my goal is to train other people to take over my position –like Steve Cartwright, Clare and Ed Sullivan and Keith Mertz,” said Rick. “I want to create a group of people who will be able to carry on and do as good job – or even a better job -- of running the maintenance program.”



## 2022 Membership Drive

To Join or to Renew your membership, go to [Membership](#)



### Donate Now!

- ◆ 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 2022.

Memberships purchased after October 1 will be good thru December 31, 2022.



Forest Solitude  
Courtesy of Connie Tagenhorst

## Getting the BMT off the Road

by Ted Reissing

Shortly after the initial Georgia segment of the Benton MacKaye Trail was completed in 1991, my wife (Kay) and I decided to attempt a thru hike on the pathway that we had helped build. Because we had never attempted any long-distance hikes and owned none of the needed equipment to accomplish such a venture, our plan was to “wimp-walk” the entire length. This approach, which is now termed “slack hiking,” involves packing only what is needed for one day and using two autos to do daily segments of A to B, B to C, C to D and so forth. Each evening the hikers can return to nice lodging (in our case a small cabin in Ellijay). We had arranged our schedule to complete the hike in nine days (averaging 8-9 miles a day) and had included one half-day walk so that we could catch-up on “life issues”.

At that time, the BMT came off Scroggin Nob and followed Laurel Creek Road to the US Hwy 76 crossing. It then followed the highway south to Lucius Road, turned west to Boardtown Road, north to Bushy Head Gap Road and then west on this road to the Gap itself. Here it rejoined Forest Service land to start Section 8. This involved about five miles of road walk, some of which was heavily trafficked.

Kay decided to use the spare time to do some laundry and shopping. Future BMTA President, Marty Dominy, had researched the area and learned that the Sisson family owned most of the land west of Hwy 76 and were developing it as a mountain community. With the free time, I decided to try and meet with the Sissons to see if they would consider allowing the BMTA to use their property to host our trail and get it off the roadways. The sales office (next to where our tool shed is now) was nearby so I stopped by to see if I could get an audience. One of Joe Sisson’s daughters was the receptionist and she called back to his office to see if he had time to talk to me. He was agreeable and I went back to his office to meet Mr. Sisson and one of his sons-in-law.

Over the next half-hour I explained to Joe and his son-in-law what our organization was all about and how their property could make a hiking experience on our trail safer and might also prove to be a great marketing tool to sell lots on his development. After a series of questions, Joe turned to his son-in-law and asked what he thought of the proposal. His son-in-law said, “Dad, you always wanted to do something like that.” So Joe asked me if I had some time. When I answered “yes,” he led me to his truck and we spent the next hour looking at different ways the Sisson property could accommodate the BMT. A few months later we began constructing the trail through the Sisson development. Those of you familiar with this portion of the trail know how much the Sissons have helped our organization with pathway privileges, money, materials, a shelter (now one of three on the entire BMT), space for headquarters, tools and more.

As a side note to this adventure, the walk along Hwy 76 did offer one benefit. The route passed right by JR’s Family Restaurant which was open for breakfast and featured a super blue grass band on Saturday nights. One morning while eating breakfast there, we learned that a solo hiker by the name of Alan Householder was following us on the trail. We left a Snickers candy bar for him with a note on the sign where the trail enters Tennessee. When we did the hike back to our car for this day, we actually met Alan at Watson Gap and learned he had hiked many of the world’s long trails.

It’s great to see the current attention to moving other trail segments off roads. And when all of the right factors come together, it is possible to get this done. During my business career I was in sales and marketing for over 35 years. I always felt that the presentation I made in Joe’s office that day was one of the best I (with some divine intervention) had ever done!

NOTE: Ted Reissing was the president of BMTA in 1990.

# Swinging Bridge and Hidden Mushrooms

by Steve Dennison



The forecast called for high winds and low temperatures but four hikers, along with Hike Leader Steve Dennison, discovered that it was actually a perfect day for hiking. Are you able to spot some shy mushrooms above the carved heart in the tree?



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## TN Work Trip

# Section 12e Lost Creek Campground to Gated FR 173

by Steve Cartwright with photos courtesy of Clare Sullivan

Fourteen BMTA volunteers participated in this work trip. The primary tasks accomplished:

- ◆ A major water diversion improvement on a short section near the creek coming down from the road
- ◆ Installed large rocks in Little Lost Creek to make fording the creek easier in high water
- ◆ Installed sectioned wood steps in two soft sections of the trail near Little Lost Creek
- ◆ Brushed out the corridor
- ◆ Completed logging out the section.

I had a great crew to work with. Special thanks to Barry Allen for oversight of the water diversion work, as well as coming up with the plans for Little Lost Creek, and how best to install the wood section steps in the muddy spots. Gilbert Treadwell and his sawyer team, Bob Nelson and Mike Pilvinsky, logged out the section and cut up the wood used for the steps. Ralph Van Pelt broke in his brand new Stihl brushcutter, and Ed Sullivan, partnering with Ralph Heller, ran his brushcutter. We welcomed Benjamin Bynum, the nephew of Ed and Clare Sullivan, who was in for a visit. Joy Nepshinsky came out for her first work trip, accompanying her husband John, who volunteered for his first work trip in October. They recently moved to Coker Creek from Florida, have joined the BMTA and are excited about participating with us for hikes and work trips. All that was planned was safely accomplished!



## Meet Gilbert Treadwell, BMTA Trail Worker of the Year

by Joy Forehand



At the Benton MacKaye Trail Association's Annual Meeting Awards Ceremony held November 13, 2021, at Unicoi Lodge in Helen, GA, Blue Ridge, resident Gilbert Treadwell was presented the Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA) Trail Worker of the Year Award.

"I was taken aback and humbled when they announced the award," said Treadwell. "I'm fortunate to be able to live in an area where I can pursue the activities in the forest that I love. That's why I want to give something back by helping maintain and protect the Benton MacKaye Trail."

As a Section Maintainer, Treadwell maintains two sections, encompassing 4.3 miles of the Benton MacKaye Trail. From 2014 to the present, he has turned in 653 hours, including 200.5 for fiscal 2021!

Treadwell graduated from Emory University and worked as a geologist for three years before switching careers to construction. He eventually started his own company, Gilcraft Construction, that specialized in remodeling homes in the Atlanta area.

"My first serious hiking trek was in the Smokies when I was 12. Eventually, my favorite past times became hiking, backpacking, camping and paddling," said Treadwell. "That's why it was so rewarding when my then 23-year-old daughter, Amanda, asked to go backpacking with me – she realized my affinity for backpacking and wanted to be a part of what I love to do."

When it comes to sawyer work, Treadwell has been heating his home with wood he has cut himself for 40 years. But it wasn't until he took the Forest Service Saw Certification class that he realized just how lucky he was that he hadn't been injured.

Although Treadwell had been careful all these years, he didn't use Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) – now he uses it religiously. He also learned some valuable techniques when sawing blowdowns.

"It's so important to hold the saw correctly – to have your thumb around the saw's handle and not on top of the handle which would allow the saw to kickback and injure you," said Treadwell. "One instructor thought that piece of advice was so important, he walked around with a stick and would tap your thumb if you weren't holding the saw correctly. I'd recommend those classes for everyone who wants to use a chainsaw – they're elucidating, rewarding and will keep you safe."

### 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](http://smile.amazon.com/ch/58-1428009).

If you do so, Amazon will direct a small share of your purchases to BMTA.

## Volunteer of the Year, Barry Allen

by Joy Forehand



At the Benton MacKaye Trail Association's Annual Meeting Awards Ceremony held November 13, 2021, at Unicoi Lodge in Helen, GA, Barry Allen was presented the Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA) Volunteer of the Year Award.

Allen served as the BMTA's Georgia Maintenance Director for four years and as president of the association for two years. He currently serves on the Board as the Immediate Past President. His volunteer efforts have followed the gamut from section maintainer to hike leader to volunteering at festivals to help get the word out about the BMT.

"Walking my dogs got me involved with BMTA," said Allen. Ten years ago, I had been walking my dogs in the neighborhood and was looking for better places to walk them. I just kept going further and further out searching for new trails."

Wanting to do more to help, Allen migrated from walking/hiking to trail work.

"We all have a point where we look for a way to volunteer," said Allen. "The key is to pick something you enjoy doing – like me, I love being outdoors."

Allen grew up like any other boy in the South (Alabama) where hunting and fishing were the norm. The activities of his youth gave him a lasting appreciation for the outdoors.

Allen's preference for the outdoor life made volunteering to help maintain the trail a "natural". As he investigated trail organizations, he liked the premise that the USFS acts as an overseer that depends on volunteers to do most of the work.

"We need to get the word out that we need help to maintain the trails," said Allen. "So many people we meet and/or reach out to on the trail don't even realize the trail needs to be maintained."

Allen's first work trip was in the vicinity of Dally Gap. The lure of the satisfying outdoor work captivated Allen and he returned again and again.

According to Allen, one of the biggest challenges the BMTA faces today is the retention and recruitment of the volunteer base for Tennessee and North Carolina. Much of the area is wilderness and access is limited. But the rewards of working in a pristine environment with crystal clear streams, secluded footpaths and panoramic vistas is priceless.

Allen is pleased with the direction in which the BMTA Maintenance is heading. The number of backpacking work trips has increased. More trail workers are offered the opportunity to be a Crew Leader for a work trip and the sawyer certification classes once again were in full-swing this fall.

He hopes the all-important after the trip socials at the trailhead will be able to resume soon as well!

## Blaze Team Kudos!

by Darcy Douglas

I want to thank all the folks on our team who have blazed the Benton MacKaye Trail this past year! I have heard so many compliments on your work. The following people earned hats that say “Benton MacKaye Trail Blaze Crew”: Cary Page, David Watkins and Gilbert Treadwell. This means they put in more than 30 hours this past year (the official year for the Forest Service is October 1-September 30) blazing the trail. The hats were made by Dick Evans’ sister and several others earned them in years past. Those blazing between 10 and 30 hours in the same time period are: Anne Anderson, Ellie Doughty, Keith Mertz, Judy Norton, Cynthia Tehan and Judy Wade. The REASON some others aren’t on this list is that the blazing they did in previous years is still good! That’s one interesting thing about this crew – we do our tasks and, when done properly, the markings last for several years.

Some facts:

- ◆ Our crew has three married couples.
- ◆ Eight new blazers were trained this past year.
- ◆ Several people adopted particular sections for blazing purposes. Others choose to paint sections as needed.

If you are interested in joining our group, please let me know. We always welcome new folks! Feel free to contact me via email [bmtadarcy@yahoo.com](mailto:bmtadarcy@yahoo.com) and we’ll make a plan.

Most sincere thanks to all on our team for the high quality of work and your dedication to the task of keeping the trail route obvious to hikers of all types. I sure do appreciate all the glass jars, too! We have enough to last us quite a while. Boy, do some people eat a lot of salsa!

Trained Blaze Team Members:

Anne Anderson, Betty Ann Archer, Harry Archer, Nelson Ashbrook, Sharon Atcheson, Tom Atcheson, Ken Cissna, Ellie Doughty, Darcy Douglas, Janie Hitchcock, David Lankford, Janice Lankford, Keith Mertz, Shane Morrison, Judy Norton, Cary Page, Gay Reed, Boe Rudder, Clare Sullivan, Cynthia Tehan, Gilbert Treadwell, Judy Wade, Patrick Ward and David Watkins.



Photo courtesy of Connie Tagenhorst

Our thanks to Tom Sewell for a great hike schedule and to all the hike leaders who made the Hike Fest an exceptional event! A special thanks to Georgia ForestWatch members Jess Riddle and Bill Witherspoon for leading some of the hikes and sharing their expertise on the geology, environmental issues and tree identifications in the area!

## Festing on Yonah Mountain!



We borrowed a dog while the owner took our photo.



One of only a few times when it was safe to look up.



Sure glad we did not have to clear this blowdown!

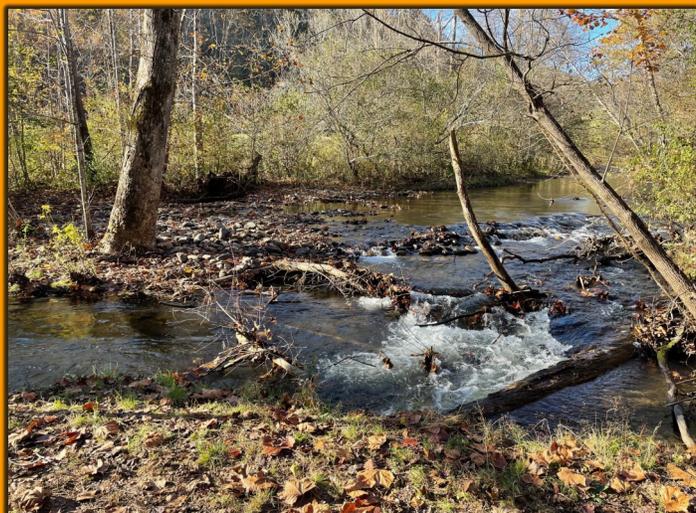


Hey, where is the trail for short legged people?!  
These steps are for Mountain Trolls!!



Bliss

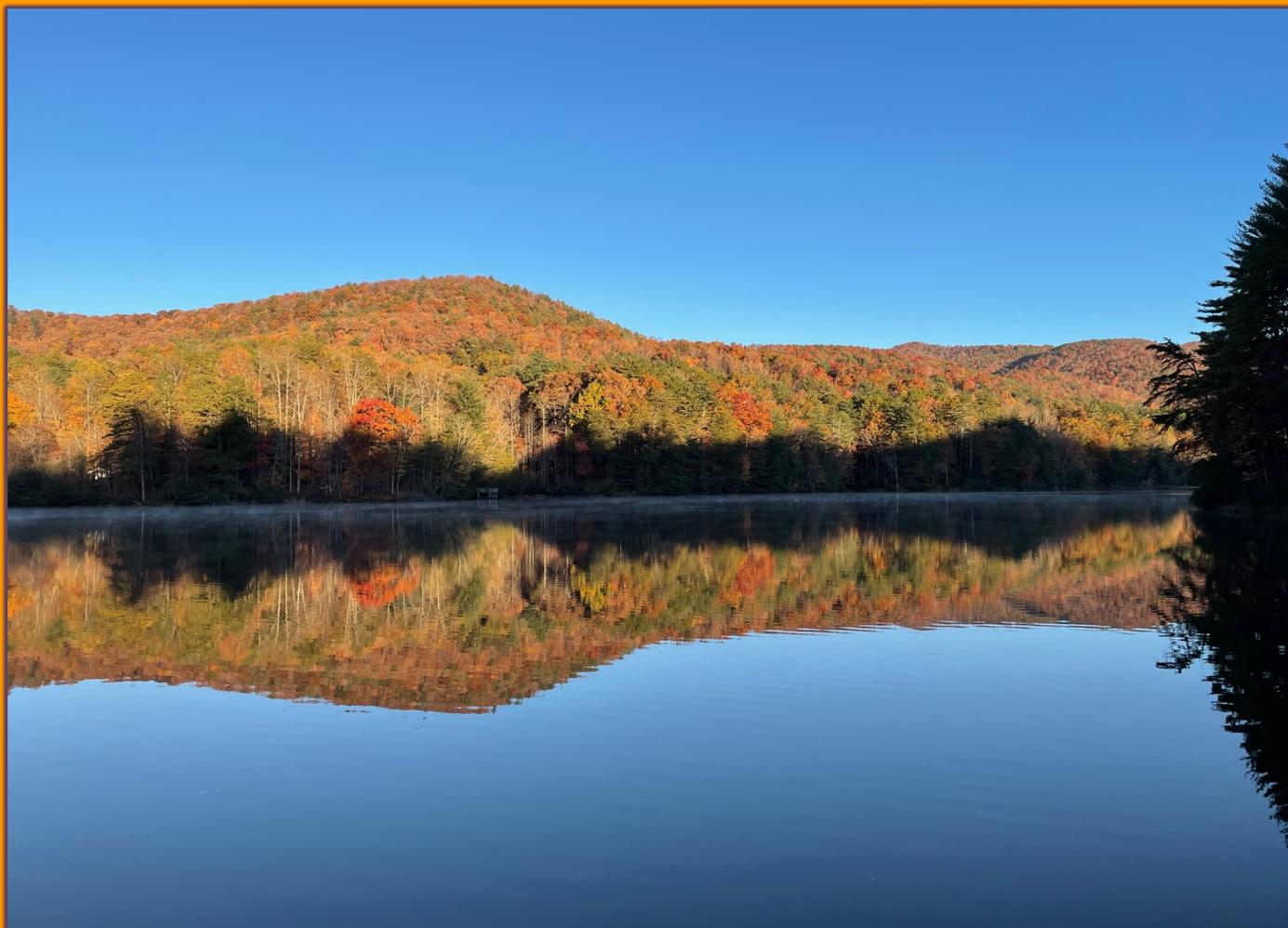
## Unicoi Lodge Delights!



Smith Creek on the Bottoms Loop Trail.



Unique Barrel Cabin



Unicoi Lake shimmers in fall's golds.

## Raven Cliffs Trail, a Lesson in Geology



## Smithgall Woods State Park



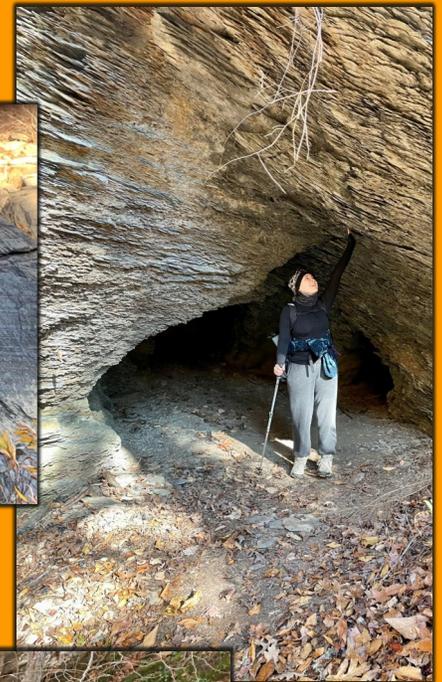
# Festing at Anna Ruby Falls



## A Hike With Adventure!

by Clare Sullivan

The 4.5-mile hike to The Narrows, a gorge through which the old riverbed flows on the Hiwassee River, was full of adventure. It is a spur trail off the BMT's Section 13d and definitely worth seeing. Nine hikers enjoyed exploring a tiny cave, crossing logs and hugging rocks beside the river on our way to The Narrows. Once there, we hiked through the underbrush onto humongous rocky beds shaped by the river. We maneuvered under the outcrops and over boulders to view interesting potholes and colors. Two new members were along, Gabe Strand and Tilly and Kelley Quinn. We also welcomed two guests, Karen Petrillo and Leah Harris with Jasper. We hope to see them on future BMTA hikes. Additional hikers were Mimi Anderson, Ken Cissna with Artie, and Evelin and Doug Yarns.



# Welcome 2022 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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# Upcoming Hikes and Work Trips

by Tom Sewell, Hiking Director

## Guidelines for Our Hikes

Because hiking in the outdoors is good for one's mental and physical health, we encouraged BMTA members and others to continue hiking during the COVID-19 health crisis *and to do so safely*. Thus, we continued our hiking program during 2020 and 2021.

Due to the availability of COVID-19 vaccines, we have further modified our hiking program:

- ◆ We have resumed allowing shuttle hikes but caution that (a) no hikers should ride with another or have another ride with them if they are concerned about their safety and (b) unvaccinated hikers should not assume that others will want to ride in vehicles with them.
- ◆ Carpooling is permitted but not required.
- ◆ Any potential hiker who is feeling ill or has been exposed recently to a person with an active case of COVID-19 must not come on a hike.
- ◆ Hikes are limited to a maximum of 10 participants in Tennessee and North Carolina and 12 participants in Georgia. Hike leaders may impose lower limits.
- ◆ Masks are optional, but hikers should maintain an appropriate distance from one another.

## December



**December 11 (Saturday) GA Work Trip** Section 11e– USFS 45 to US Hwy 64. Sidehilling, repair a rock wall and replace wooden steps. For more information contact Bob Cowdrick [GAMaintDirector@bmtamail.org](mailto:GAMaintDirector@bmtamail.org).

**December 16 (Thursday)** Select Trails of Talking Rock Nature Preserve. Dog friendly hike (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Easy to moderate 4-5 miles.

Hike Leader Ken Cissna. For more information contact [hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org).

**December 17 (Friday)** BMT, Hemp Top, Jacks River Trails. We will start hiking from Watson Gap, enter the Cohutta Wilderness on the BMT, then use the Hemp Top and Jacks River trails to complete a circle and return over a 2.6 repeat of the BMT to Watson Gap again. About 8.3 miles. Moderately strenuous. Hike Leader Steve Dennison. For more information contact [hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org).



**December 18 (Saturday) TN Work Trip** Sections 12a, b. Annual logout and re-fresh blazes. For more information for Section 12a contact Steve Cartwright [scdcmc@comcast.net](mailto:scdcmc@comcast.net). For more information for Section 12b contact Rick Harris [harrisri@aol.com](mailto:harrisri@aol.com).

**December 22 (Wednesday)** BMT. Deep Gap on Aska Road to Fall Branch Falls and return. Strenuous 11 miles. Hike Leader Steve Dennison. For more information contact [hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.org).

## January

**January 1 (Saturday)** Upper Springer Mountain Loop. This 4.6-mile loop provides visits to the southern terminus of both the Appalachian and Benton MacKaye trails, with two lovely vistas. Start the first day of 2022 with a great hike. Hike Leader Michael Pilvinsky.

For more information contact [hikeleaderMP@bmtamail.com](mailto:hikeleaderMP@bmtamail.com).

**January 5 (Wednesday)** Benton MacKaye Trail from Weaver Creek to Fall Branch Falls and return. Moderate/strenuous 11.4 miles. Hike Leader Steve Dennison.

For more information contact [hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.com](mailto:hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.com).



**January 8 (Saturday) GA Work Trip** Sections 1a-b-c — Springer Mountain >> Three Forks. Logout, brushout & tread repair. Contact Bob Cowdrick [bcowdrick@comcast.net](mailto:bcowdrick@comcast.net).

**January 10 (Monday)** Amadahy Trail at Carter's Lake. Easy/moderate 4-5 miles if you go out to the "boat/hike campground". This will be a leisurely hike. Hike Leaders Evelyn and Doug Yarns For more information contact [hikeleaderEY@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderEY@bmtamail.org).

**January 14 (Friday)** BMT from Three Forks to No Name Bald and back. Dog friendly hike (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Moderate 4.3 miles. Mostly following Long Creek. Largely uphill going and reverse returning. Approximately 700' of elevation change each way. We'll include a side trip to Long Creek Falls. Hike Leader Ken Cissna. For more information contact [hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderKC@bmtamail.org).

**January 17 (Monday)** Thunder Rock Express on to Chestnut Mountain Trail to BMT down to Thunder Rock Campground. Moderate 6.5 miles/Whitewater Center in Ducktown, Tennessee. Hike Leaders Tom and Carolyn Sewell. For more information contact [hikeleaderTS@bmtamail.org](mailto:hikeleaderTS@bmtamail.org).

**January 21 (Friday)** Bushy Head Gap to McKenny and return. Moderately strenuous 8 miles. Hike Leader Steve Dennison. For more information contact [hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.com](mailto:hikeleaderSD@bmtamail.com).



**January 22 (Saturday) TN Work Trip** 19e from BMT/AT Intersection to Fontana Shelter. Contact Keith Mertz [keithmertz@hotmail.com](mailto:keithmertz@hotmail.com).



*Save the Dates!*

**November 3 - 6, 2022**

**BMTA Hike Fest and Annual Meeting**

Fontana Village, North Carolina

For reservations call (828) 498-2211.

To receive your discount -

Mention the Benton MacKaye Trail Association!

To access our website calendar go [HERE](#).

Deadline for the January Newsletter is Wednesday, December 29.

Thank you!