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Points of Interest

Click the title to go directly to the page.

[Annual Meeting](#)

[Membership](#)

[Trail Maintainer of the Year](#)

[Veterans Honored](#)

[Hike Fest](#)

[Joyce Kilmer Forest Hike](#)

[Wesser Bald Hike](#)

[President's Column](#)

[Tellico Plains Festival](#)

[Outstanding Day](#)

[Deep Creek Hike](#)

[Suzy Downing's Photography Hike](#)

[Volunteer of the Year](#)

[Upcoming](#)

[Happy Thanksgiving!](#)



BMTA Officers 2025-2026

President:	Bob Cowdrick
Vice President:	Kelly Wentworth
Secretary:	Jessie Hayden
Treasurer:	Suzy Mayes
GA M/D:	Joe Cantwell
TN/NC M/D:	Patrick Ward
Smokies Coord:	Steve Pruett
Hiking Director:	Ray Laws
Membership:	Byron Coker
Communications:	Joy Forehand
Conservation:	Darcy Douglas
Past President:	Ken Cissna
Store:	Sue Ricker
Newsletter:	Kathy Williams
State Rep GA:	TBD
State Rep TN/NC:	TBD



BMTA Headquarters

Benton MacKaye Trail Association



VOLUME 42, ISSUE 11

NOVEMBER 2025

The 2025 BMTA Annual Meeting and Hike Fest

by Clare Sullivan

Photos courtesy of Brenda Harris, Denise Ritchie, Liz Henderson, Clare Sullivan, Steve Pruett and Leslie McConachie

The Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA) Annual Meeting and Hike Fest was held October 30 through November 2 at Lands Creek Log Cabins in beautiful Bryson City, North Carolina. Bubbling creeks, roaring waterfalls and spectacular fall color surrounded us as we made new friends, hiked and enjoyed everyone's company.



Harmony Hall was the center of activities.

Attendees got their first glimpse of the wide array of items for BMTA's Raffle during Friday evening's Veterans Event to honor BMTA veterans. There were several donated items that were handmade by BMTAers, including a bright, cheery quilt by Adri Herman; a BMTA throw pillow by Darcy Douglas; a striking cedar table by Patrick Ward, Six Pond Farm's small barn quilt; Joanna McNally's set of three paintings of the BMT; and a large, colorful barn quilt by Jessie Hayden. Suzy Downing donated two of her nature photographs while Rick and Brenda Harris donated nature photographs by Award-Winning photographer Dorothy Baxter and framed by Rick Harris.



Denise Ritchie with her raffle winning table!



Liz Henderson is thrilled to have won this stunning quilt!

There were 65 attendees at the Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet. BMTA President Bob Cowdrick shared comments from Clean Trails Day, and Past President Ken Cissna gave an update on the quest to become the 12th National Scenic Trail. Cowdrick also recognized past Presidents, Ken Cissna, George Owen, Darcy Douglas and Dick Evans.

Lydia Burns received a plaque for five years of service as Treasurer. Barry Allen, Steve Hayden, Kelly Motter, and Clare Sullivan received plaques in recognition of their service to the Board. Keith Mertz received a plaque for outstanding service to the BMT as a maintainer and blazer. Kathy Anderson received a plaque for her leadership in establishing the BMTA Partner Program. Dick Evans' plaque was for years of service as the Liasson with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The Fontana Village Marina received a plaque for their 20 Years of Service Partnering with the BMTA to clean campsites along the BMT in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.



Keith Mertz in his Blazer cap.

The next item on the agenda was the election of officers for 2026 – those elected were:

President: Bob Cowdrick
 Vice President: Kelly Wentworth
 Secretary: Jessie Hayden
 Treasurer: Suzie Mays
 GA Maintenance Director: Joe Cantwell
 TN/NC Maintenance Director: Patrick Ward
 Smokies Coordinator: Steve Pruett
 Conservation Director: Darcy Douglas

Coordinator of Electronic Media: Joy Forehand
 Membership Director: Bryon Coker
 Hiking Director: Ray Laws

The GA Representative and the TN/NC Representative will be appointed by the President. The Newsletter Editor, Electronic Communications Coordinator and Store Manager are appointed by the Board.



Marci Spencer's presentation was informative and captivating.

Cherokee National Forest, A History, was the title of our featured speaker Marci Spencer's presentation. It is also the title of her book, published in 2024. She highlighted the Cherokee Type I Interagency Hotshot Crew (IHC) in the northern Unaka Ranger District of the Cherokee National Forest (CNF). In 2021, the IHC celebrated its twentieth anniversary. It is an elite wildland firefighting crew, one of only 110 crews in the nation.

Interesting facts shared about the southern region of the CNF were the 75 native fish in the Conasauga River in the Ocoee District. Biologists claim that it is one of the ten most biologically diverse rivers in the country. Some of its aquatic species exist nowhere else on Earth.

Another interesting story of the Ocoee District was the building of the 1994 Bailey Bridge at the Ocoee White-water Center. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 41st Bridge Company of Fort Campbell, Kentucky, erected the bridge, donated by the Department of Defense. The open-weave bridge permitted unobstructed TV camera coverage of the 1996 Olympic slalom races.



Chowing down!

Following the banquet of fresh-fried trout and baked chicken, Rick Harris gave an Ode to the 45th Anniversary of the Grand Opening of the BMTA. Rick was filling in for Ken Jones who had heart surgery two days prior to the Annual Meeting. Rick shared the triumph of Clayton Pannell's eight years of dedication and determination to get the BMT to traverse the state of Tennessee. It was the well-oiled machine of Ken Jones, Clayton Pannell, Robert Owenby and Gary Smith, who worked three days a week completing the BMT from Georgia to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.



Rick Harris wore many hats at the Fest!

Kathy Williams was named Volunteer of the Year. She has served as Newsletter Editor of the BMTA for 10 years. Receiving compliments from members and nonmembers alike, the *Newsletter* truly is an outstanding publication. Kathy always makes it interesting ... with a bit of humor on the side.

Steve Hayden, Daphne Martin and Laurie Schatz were named the 2025 Trail Workers of the Year. They received engraved handsaws for their 1,195 hours of work as a team scouting, installing signs on the trail, removing blowdowns as well as brush cutting and maintaining the trail in general.



Joe Cantwell and Patrick Ward gave updates on trail maintenance. These two sure look like trouble! Just look at those grins!



Greg Trotnic earned the coveted 100-hour jacket for the first time!

Joe Cantwell and Patrick Ward reported 5,749.9 hours of maintenance work with no injuries! Sixty-three members received T-shirts for 30 hours of trail work and 27 members received the coveted 100-Hour Maintainer Club Awards.

Five Hike Leaders received Hike Leader T-shirts, and four hike leaders received the Hike Leader 50-Miler Award for having led 50 plus miles of hikes during the year.

Sixteen T-shirts were awarded to those who volunteer behind the scenes donating their time with financial records, the BMTA Online Store and BMTA's fairly new Wholesale Division, etc. Eight volunteers joined the Volunteer 100-Hour Club as they earned more than 100 hours.



This was the fifth year for the Trail Maintainer's Idiosyncrasy Award which recognizes a person for their . . . "especially adamant personal preferences". Ken Cissna and Clare Sullivan received a jigsaw puzzle of the 11 National Scenic Trails with the hopefully 12th National Scenic Trail, the BMT, drawn onto the puzzle in red! This award was for their undying efforts to make this happen!



What in the world!!!! Looks like a bunch of rowdies! Hats and shirts off to everyone! Taking this photo was our intrepid Brenda Harris who “hiked” to the top of a chair without incident, peering down and demanding smiles! Thank you, Brenda!



Dave and Sue Ricker brought the BMTA Store to the Annual Meeting. Tireless Sue manages this endeavor all year long!

The 2025 Annual Meeting and Hike Fest was a truly memorable event. It was the first year the event has even been held in Bryson City, North Carolina. The scenic retreat, breathtaking landscapes, winding trails, outdoor thrills and fresh mountain air gave us a chance to reconnect with both nature and friends who all have a love for the Benton MacKaye Trail.

Thanks to those who helped make the Annual Meeting a reality: Kathy Anderson, Tom and Sharon Atcheson, Patti Barrows, Bob Cowdrick, Joy Forehand, Rick and Brenda Harris, Jaime Lozano, Sue and Dave Ricker, Ed Sullivan, Cindy and Patrick Ward and Kathy Williams.

To get the complete list of shirt winners click below:

[Maintenance – 30-Hour T-Shirts](#) [Volunteer 30-Hour T-Shirts](#) [Hike Leader T-Shirts](#)

[Maintenance – 100-Hour Club](#) [Volunteer 100-Hour Club](#) [Hike Leader 50-Miler Club](#)

Invest in the Best!

Join or Renew Your Membership!

Our Annual Membership Drive started in October and it's off to a fantastic start!

We want to extend a big welcome to all our new members! We are so glad you joined the BMTA Team. And, a big thank you to everyone who has renewed their membership. Your continued investment in the Benton MacKaye Trail is much appreciated.

Speaking of investments — if you haven't yet renewed don't forget to do so soon! There are a number of membership options available including Individual, Family, Student, Retired, Veteran and Life. Of course, there's also Member by Donation (for any donation of \$50 or more you can have either a Family or Individual Membership).

Your BMTA Membership or Donation is an investment for the long term. You are investing for the benefit of not only yourself, but for others as well by creating a legacy for others to follow and enjoy for generations to come.

Go to [MEMBERSHIP](#) to Join or Renew or

Go to [DONATION](#) to make a donation.

Remember, new members get the rest of 2025 free!



It only takes a few minutes—Join or Renew today!

Trail Maintenance Workers of the Year – The Three Amigos

by Joy Forehand with photo courtesy of Steve Pruett

The Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA) hit the trifecta when Steve Hayden, Daphne Martin and Laurie Schatz became one of the regular maintenance teams. At this year's Annual Meeting and Hike Fest Banquet, held in Bryson, North Carolina, November 1, 2025, the three received the Trail Workers of the Year Award.

Each of the "Three Amigos" as they are known has a life-long love of the outdoors. Steve's interest was piqued as a youth when he was in the Scouts. Laurie was inspired to section-hike the entire Appalachian Trail in the state of Pennsylvania. Daphne just plain loves taking an "oxygen bath" anytime/anywhere in the woods.

When Laurie retired and moved to Blue Ridge, GA, she joined BMTA to learn more about the hiking trails in the area. She quickly developed a desire to help keep the BMT in shape and became a regular on BMTA's maintenance trips. Laurie and Daphne met when Daphne was walking on a road near Laurie's house. A strong friendship was born, and they began enjoying the trails together. It was Laurie who introduced Daphne to trail maintenance and Daphne loved it!



Steve Hayden accepted the individual saws for his other two Amigos. Well done!!

Daphne is the driving force behind the productivity of the group. As the lead sawyer, Steve delivers the safety talks. Before beginning to work on the tasks at hand, the team discusses the trees they're cutting, the protocol to be used, the stresses (binds and bends of the tree) that may be encountered as well as the all-important emergency plan.

Steve is certified as a crosscut and chainsaw sawyer. Daphne is certified as a crosscut sawyer while Laurie has earned the titles of Director of Airborne Biomass Relocation and Caption Crash Bang Boom as she throws stuff off the trail. She also enjoys sharing crosscut duties on the other end of the saw from Steve.

Each of them is a Section Maintainer. Steve maintains Sections 5a and 5b (Wilscot Gap >> Brawley Mountain). Laurie and Daphne maintain 10a (Watson Gap >> Jacks River Trail).

While participating in Three Amigos trips, official BMTA work trips and working with other crews, Laurie garnered 332 hours, Daphne 416.5 and Steve 446.5 for a grand total of 1,195 hours!

According to the Three Amigos, the foundation of their success lies in the strong bond between the three of them – each amigo's expertise, enthusiasm for the outdoors and physical skills compliments the talents and abilities of the others.

Veterans Honored

by Patti Barrows with photos courtesy of Brenda Harris, Steve Pruett and Kathy Williams

This year's Annual Meeting and Hike Fest included something new – the first Benton MacKaye Trail Association's (BMTA) Veterans event. The association wanted to recognize and celebrate the contributions of the veterans who are part of our organization. Upon walking into Harmony Hall on Friday evening, attendees were greeted by patriotic decorations, including beautiful artistic centerpieces that adorned every table. Embedded in the centerpieces were two US flags standing tall above the rustic wooden base ... a representation of the deep-running passions of our Veterans for both commitment to country and the natural world. The television screen offered a rotating photographic and informational presentation of the veterans and their service. The repeating PowerPoint was created by 14-year Army/Army Reserves veteran Kathy Anderson.



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The evening commenced with 4-year Navy Veteran Clayton Webster leading the attendees in patriotic and emotional renditions of the Pledge of Allegiance and our National Anthem. It was inspirational to see the veterans standing at attention facing the US flag that represents their commitment to their country, military service and democracy. A deep sense of pride and thankfulness was evident throughout Harmony Hall.



The poignant display on the MIAs/POW table was a sober reminder of those who will never return and those who are still missing today. The symbolism of the Missing Man table reminds us, not only of the past sacrifices of our veterans, but also of the ongoing sacrifice of those currently in the military as well as of many veterans today ... including their families.

For the details on what the table setting represents, go to the [Missing Man Table](#).



Clayton Webster, ready for duty.

A cookout style meal catered by B & Al's Catering, in Sylva, North Carolina was next on the agenda. Dinner was followed by an opportunity for the veterans to vote on which charity would receive the evening's donation of \$25 for every veteran attending the event. Ten dollars would be donated for every veteran who is a BMTA member and completed the Veterans Form but was unable to attend. And a \$20 donation was collected from generous attendees. After the votes were counted, the Mountain Ranger Association received the \$700 donation!

Continued next page

The charity vote was followed by a spirited trivia competition, that included photos of veterans while in the military, more recent photos of them hiking and details about their military service. The evening highlighted the contributions of our many veterans, including (but not limited to) Jess Morgan's 20 years of Navy service, Mike Pilvinsky's 24 years of service in the Army, Greg Trotnic's 28 years Army service, Denise Ritchie's 11 years in the Air Force, and Carol Nufer's 11 years with the Army Reserves. We also were honored to have a former member of the Allied Forces as a member of our association – Ian Guttridge who served for 27 years in the British Army. The evening concluded with Army veteran and BMTA Founding Member George Owen's presentation of *Tales from the Trails*.

A gentle reminder from the words of Maya Angelo "how important it is for us to recognize and celebrate our heroes and she-roes" ... we hope the military veteran heroes and she-roes of the BMTA felt truly honored and appreciated.

For a complete list of Vets for the BMT, go to [Veterans](#).

Tales from the Trail - George Owen

by Kathy Williams

BMTA's legendary curmudgeon, George Owen, entertained us with his humorous and enlightening trail tales. He had plenty after spending decades laying out, building and hiking trails in the mountains. He did own up to being responsible for the notorious Duncan Ridge Trail as well as a trail that, poorly built, caused him to fall and injure his back. He tried to assert that he had always led his hikes as advertised but this assertion was challenged by Kathy Williams who told of a 4 1/2-mile hike that ended up being 9 miles. At one point she had asked him if they were going to get out of the woods before dark. His snarky reply, "If you can keep the pace."



David Watkins and Darcy Douglas know that George is up to no good with that grin on his face!

Hike Fest

by Clare Sullivan

The 2025 BMTA Hike Fest was very successful. Hikers experienced fall in full color with lovely weather. All the Thursday hikes began in the Deep Creek area of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park (GSMNP). The Friday hikes all started near the “Tunnel to Nowhere” in the GSMNP. The most popular hikes were the Deep Creek – Waterfalls Loop Trail and the Noland Creek/BMT Trail. Hikers on the Lakeshore Trail ...AKA Lower Forney Loop Trail also got to experience the BMT.

Thank you to our hike leaders, Ralph Collinson, Ken Cissna, Suzy Downing, Darcy Douglas, Rick and Brenda Harris, Tammie Register, Ed Sullivan, Gilbert Treadwell, plus Patrick and Cindy Ward.

Thank you to our Hike Fest Coordinator Patti Barrows for designing the 2025 Hike Fest.

The hikes included:

Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest

AT from Tellico Gap to Wesser Bald

Walks with Suzy Downing to practice phone camera skills

Deep Creek-Waterfalls Loop Trail

Deep Creek Loop Trail

Lonesome Pine Overlook

Tunnel Bypass Trail

Noland Creek Trail/BMT

Lakeshore Trail...AKA Lower Forney Loop Trail (BMT)

Tsali Recreation Area – Thompson Loop



Hikers at Deep Creek with photo courtesy of Ray Laws

Hike Fest at Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest

Photos courtesy of Kathy Williams

Trees

By Joyce Kilmer

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing
breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.



Awed by the immensity of old growth forest.



No better place to be than amongst the trees.



To persevere, no matter what.

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When the old growth hemlocks died from the wooly ad-
elgid they were dynamited. This led to stumps resem-
bling pineapples.



The trail meandered across streams and deep woods.



Soothing streams bubble and rush in their journey.



So, what story lies behind this wonder?

Hike Fest at Wesser Bald

Photos courtesy of Leslie McConachie and Ray Laws



Up, up, up into the clouds they trekked!



President's Column

by Bob Cowdrick

The BMTA is proud to announce an exciting milestone in our ongoing effort to secure national recognition and long-term protection for the Benton MacKaye Trail.

On October 21st, the Benton MacKaye National Scenic Trail Feasibility Study Act of 2025 (S. 1376) passed out of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee with unanimous bipartisan support — a critical step forward toward our goal of permanent protection for the BMT.

The bill, sponsored by Senators Raphael Warnock and Thom Tillis (R-NC), and cosponsored by Senators Jon Ossoff (D-GA) and Ted Budd (R-NC), directs the U.S. Forest Service to study the feasibility of designating the BMT as a National Scenic Trail (NST).

An NST designation would benefit the BMTA in many ways — from membership growth and trail awareness to increased technical assistance and community engagement. These opportunities would strengthen our organization and expand public awareness of the BMT.

We did not make this progress alone. For the past three years, we have engaged Monument Advocacy to shepherd us through this process. They have provided valuable guidance and coordination with legislators and federal partners. As we move forward, the BMTA Board will continue to evaluate the benefits of pursuing NST designation, and the support received by Monument Advocacy.

This progress reflects years of dedication and partnership among BMTA volunteers, supporters, and our allies across Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina. While this is a huge win, our work is far from over. The bill now moves to the full Senate for consideration. Without a doubt, we are creating Benton MacKaye Trail history!

BMTA to the Len Foote Hike Inn for Half-Price

by Clare Sullivan

The beautiful Len Foote Hike Inn has reserved rooms for BMTA members on Monday, February 23, 2026. All rooms will be half-price. Members can call 706-344-1547, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM-2:30 PM, to make a reservation. Let them know you want a room transferred from Clare Sullivan's name to your name.

The cost for two hikers is \$124.70, which includes dinner and breakfast. One person in a room is \$92.80. These prices include taxes. While there, you can enjoy a history and tour of the inn at 5:00 PM. Following dinner, there will be an interesting, optional presentation. The Inn holds a Platinum Level Leed Certification by the U.S. Green Building Council.



The scenic 5-mile hike gradually goes uphill. The rooms are heated and have electricity. You receive a cloth bag with sheets and a towel at check-in. Extra-long bunk beds are in each room. The meals include fresh food. The bathhouse is just steps from your room and has hot showers. Lights line the covered walkway to the bathhouse. Puzzles, books, games and a few guitars are available in the lovely sunroom. Relaxing chairs are on the deck. Feel free to visit the Len Foote Hike Inn website at [The Hike Inn](#).

Tellico Plains Fall Festival

Photos courtesy of Brenda and Rick Harris



Always a favorite with both the young and older the crosscut experience gives smiles and a workout!



What an outstanding day for the Benton MacKaye Trail Association!

by Bob Cowdrick

On Saturday October 18th, 2025, we held our fourth annual BMTA Clean Trails Day. We had trailhead information tables at the Swinging Bridge and Fall Branch Falls.

The volunteers handed out trash bags, trash gloves, LNT-BMTA info cards and BMTA carabiners. We encouraged visitors to become more aware of the BMT, not to leave trash on the trail, consider joining the BMTA, and participate in our weekly hikes and monthly maintenance trips.

The funding for the event was made possible through a National Forest Foundation Grant, the Spenser and Marci Kernea Family and other donations.

Thanks to our volunteer's energy, and smiles, we greeted visitors from Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, Texas, Florida, North Carolina, Kansas and even Washington State. They shared the message of "Leave No Trace" and introduced hundreds of visitors to the beauty and purpose of the BMT.



The Allen Family is happy to help!

Throughout the day, they handed out trash bags, gloves, LNT-BMTA info cards, and BMTA carabiners — all while encouraging visitors to help keep the trail clean and learn more about our organization.

The results speak for themselves:

- 1 Visitor from Seattle, WA
- 2 BMTA trailheads
- 4 Large bags of trash removed
- 13 BMTA volunteers participated
- 86 Volunteer work hours
- 302 Swinging Bridge visitors
- 524 Fall Branch Falls visitors



The Massee Family enjoying the fall color and helping to keep the trail clean!



Kirksey Girls went on a day hike to the Swinging Bridge.

That's 826 people (and a few dogs) who left knowing more about the Benton MacKaye Trail and the importance of protecting it!

While this is not an effort where we'll see instant results, I truly believe your impact will ripple forward. In time, we'll see new members joining, new volunteers stepping up for work trips and cleaner trails for all to enjoy.



BMTA PARTNERSHIPS

Help BMTA preserve, protect and maintain the Benton MacKaye Trail.

Become a BMTA Business, Silver, Gold, Platinum or Diamond Partner today!

Go to [Partnerships](#) to view the details.

Employer Identification #58-1428009.

**If you receive a benefit as a result of making a contribution to a qualified organization, you can deduct only the amount of your contribution that is more than the value of the benefit you receive.*

Hike Fest Deep Creek Waterfalls Loop Hike

Photos courtesy of Kathy Williams



Juney Whank Falls was the first waterfall on the loop.



Tom Branch Falls was the next sparkling gem.



Spectacular fall colors framed the trails.

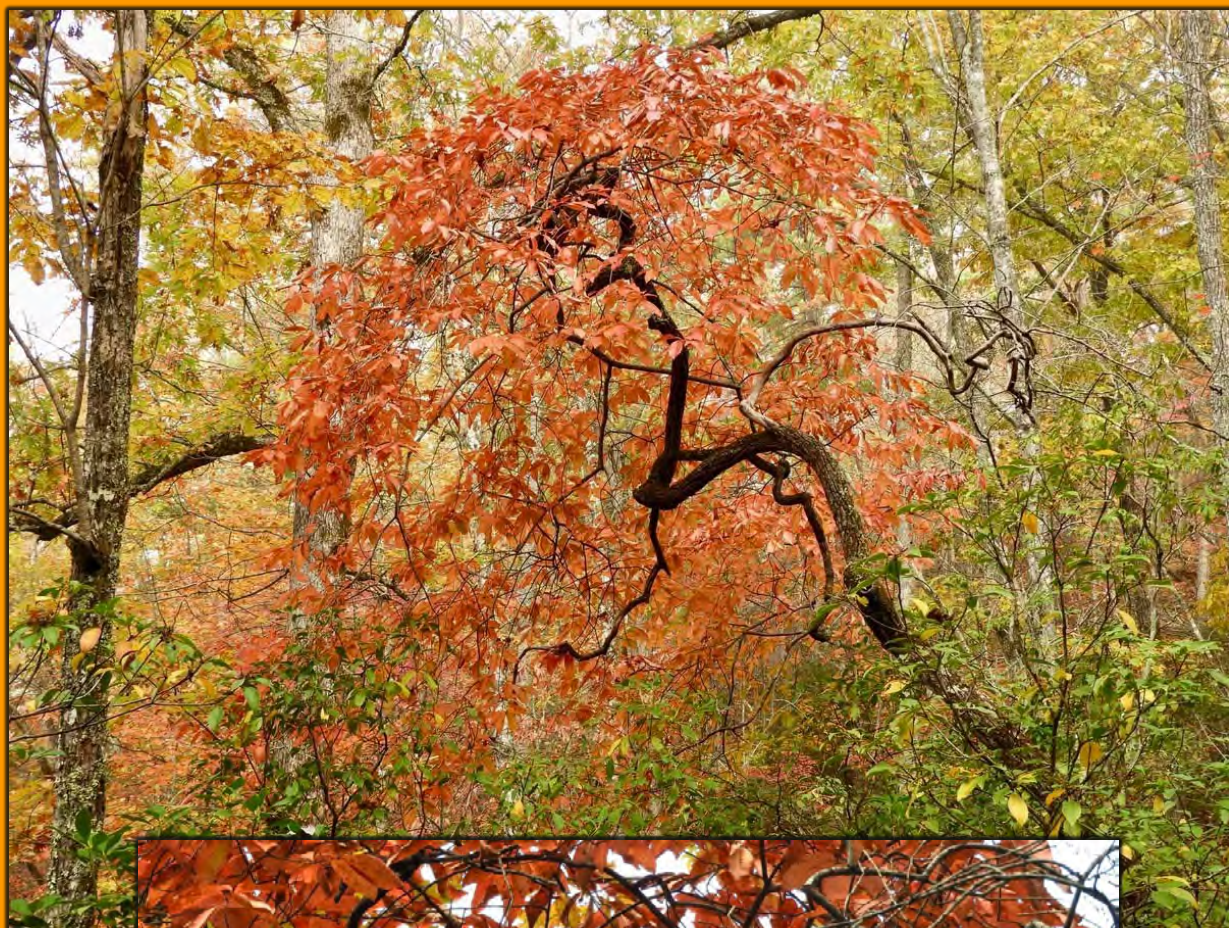


Indian Creek Falls was crowned with brilliant forest hues.

Hike Fest - Suzy Downing's Photography Hike

Photos courtesy of Susy Downing

The hikes with Suzy Downing were not only informative, but incredibly beautiful with nature providing an abundance of visual pleasures! Hikers were encouraged to look for nature's unusual shapes.



Continued next page

Suzy demonstrated how to have Halloween fun!



Volunteer of the Year

by Joy Forehand with photo courtesy of Brenda Harris



BMTA's Newsletter Editor, Kathy Williams, was named Volunteer of the Year at BMTA's Annual Meeting Awards Banquet held at Lands Creek Log Cabins in Bryson City, NC, November 1, 2025.

An Army brat, Kathy's family moved a lot. Her father introduced her to horses on her sixth birthday when he took her horseback riding. She later took riding lessons in Germany at a Spanish-style arena lined with mirrors. At MacDill Air Force Base, Kathy remembers riding a horse named Missy. "It wasn't the most pleasant experience since Missy dumped me a lot," said Kathy.

She has fond memories of her job at Tampa General Hospital where she was a Ward Clerk on the Pediatric Floor. She always will treasure the picture taken of her with the famous clown, Emmett Kelly, Jr., when he visited the kids at the hospital.

The allure of horses drew her to begin showing horses – western pleasure, halter and barrel racing. She was co-manager of the Silver Dollar Ranch, a Quarter Horse breeding and show operation.

Kathy's next venture in horses was in Fort Smith, AK, where she trained racehorses – she also was a jockey at the track.

When she left the horse world, Kathy went to work for a convenience store, quickly moving up from the mid-night shift to become the Southern District Manager. That job enabled her to put her kids through college.

She completed her college degree in International Studies with a minor in Spanish in 2014. Around the same time, she retired to Blue Ridge, GA.

In May 2015, Kathy went on her first BMTA hike. Ken Cissna was the hike leader. After recouping with lunch at the Pink Pig, the group went to Marcia Leman's cabin to chat and relax ... which led to Kathy's first job with BMTA.

"I mentioned I was the first editor of my high school newspaper," said Kathy. "I also was working on the first of my two books."

Kathy laughed, "A couple of glasses of wine later, Ken had talked me into doing the *BMTA Newsletter*. Be careful what you do and say when you hike, eat and then have wine."

The *Newsletter* was a bit of a challenge for Kathy – she'd never used Microsoft Publisher. A quick learner, her layouts receive rave reviews. She also likes to mix in a bit of humor by using the antics of Tiny Sasquatch, Mr. Bones and Snoopy, accompanied by Woodstock in the woods.

Like many with the BMTA, it was inevitable that hiking would lead to a desire to keep the trail in shape. She is the Section Maintainer for Section 7a (Weaver/Laurel Creek Rd >> GA Hwy 515).

Always looking to learn more about hiking and the trails, Kathy has thoroughly enjoyed attending BMTA Founding Member George Owen's classes at Young Harris College.

"George takes the groups on hikes after most of the classes," said Kathy. "My favorite was when George took the class to Hogpen Gap to view the partial eclipse from the top of the mountain."

The *Newsletter* is about to present Kathy with a new challenge – Microsoft is discontinuing Publisher in October 2026. Undaunted, she's well on her way to learning the new program, InDesign.

Upcoming

by Ray Laws , Hiking Director

Maintenance trips contingent upon government shutdown.

No Access to Chilhowee Recreation Area and Forest Service Road #77 due to construction. Additional construction work is planned for the Ocoee Byway Scenic Forest Road #77, resulting in intermittent interruptions to road access. Please consult the Cherokee National Forest website for road closure information at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r08/cherokee>.

November

November 10 (Monday) Thunder Rock Express to BMTA to Thunder Rock Campground. Moderate 5 miles. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at rcollinson@bmta.org.



November 22 (Saturday) BMTA TN/NC Maintenance Trip.
Portions of Section 19a - Tapoco Lodge » Old Field Gap Road
Where: Section 19b - Old Field Gap Road » FS 251C (East End)
Where: Section 18e - Yellowhammer Gap » Tapoco Lodge
Contact:
BMTA TN-NC Maintenance Director at bmtatn-ncmaintdirector@bmta.org

November 26 (Wednesday) BMT at Lost Creek in Reliance, Tennessee. Easy/moderate 5 miles with one stream crossing. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at rcollinson@bmta.org.

November 28 (Friday) Amadahy Trail. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Easy/moderate 5 miles. Good hike for the day after Thanksgiving.
Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at kcissna@bmta.org.

November 30 (Sunday) BMT Series: Spanish Oak Gap to Double Spring Joint GATC-BMTA Series. Last section of the BMT in GA! Very strenuous section 10.8 miles out and back.
Contact Hike Leader Kelly Motter at kmotter@bmta.org.

December

December 5 (Friday) BMT: Dally Gap to Jack's River and back. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Moderate 5 miles. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at kcissna@bmta.org.

December 8 (Monday) Wagon Train Trail. Moderate, mostly flat or downhill, from Brasstown Bald to Young Harris College. Hike of 6.6 miles with a shuttle between Brasstown Bald's parking lot and Young Harris College's parking lot. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at rcollinson@bmta.org.



December 13 (Saturday) BMTA GA Maintenance Trip.
Tentatively Section 2 — No Name Bald to Swinging Bridge.
Contact the Georgia Maintenance Director at bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org.

December 17 (Wednesday) Three Forks. Moderate 5-mile hike on the AT and the BMT where they join together. Start on FS Rd. 58 with a side trip to the waterfall on Long Creek and Cemetery Pavilion at Hickory Flats and return. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at rcollinson@bmta.org.

December 19 (Friday) Fightingtown Creek #3. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Easy/moderate 4 miles. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at kcissna@bmta.org.



December 20 (Saturday) BMTA TN/NC Maintenance Trip. TBA
Contact:
BMTA TN-NC Maintenance Director at bmtatn-ncmaintdirector@bmta.org

January



January 10 (Saturday) BMTA GA Maintenance Trip. TBA
Contact the Georgia Maintenance Director at bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org.

January 12 (Monday) Dyer Gap to Flat Top to Double Hog Gap and return. Mainly moderate 8 miles with some strenuous sections. Contact Hike Leader Steve Dennison at sdennison@bmta.org.



January 24 (Saturday) BMTA TN/NC Maintenance Trip. TBA
Contact:
BMTA TN-NC Maintenance Director at bmtatn-ncmaintdirector@bmta.org

January 26 (Monday) Wilscot Gap to Old Dial Rd and return. Strenuous 11.5 miles.
Contact Hike Leader Steve Dennison at sdennison@bmta.org.

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



Check Out This Month's [BMT Blog](#)

*'Hidden Stories Along the Benton MacKaye Trail:
Doc Rogers, Proctor & Lost Mountain History'*



Shop the BMTA Trail Store
Perfect gifts for all your hiker friends!



BMTA Trail Store
**Items usually ship within a week.*



Happy Thanksgiving from Mr Bones and the BMTA!



Her second annual meeting...she got the table decoration!

**The deadline for the December Newsletter is Wednesday, December 3.
Thank you! More Hike Fest photos next month!**

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