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"... leaving a footpath for generations to follow."

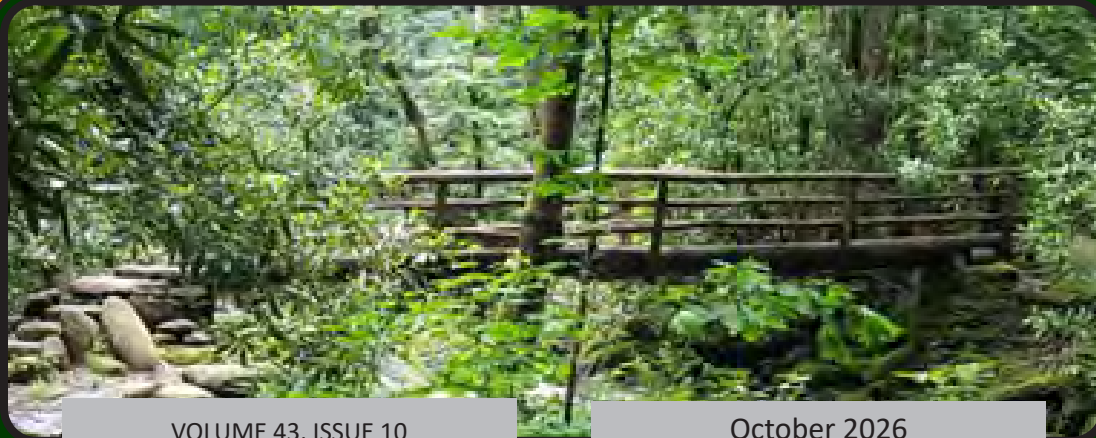
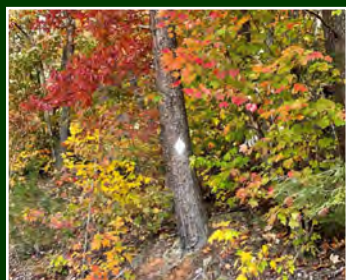
BENTON MACKAYE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

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VOLUME 43, ISSUE 10

October 2026

News from the North

An update on the BMT in the Cheoah Ranger District

by Dick Evans

Most everyone in the BMTA has heard of Hurricane Helene and its effects on Western North Carolina. Although damage directly to the BMT was fairly minor, it was only one of a series of natural events that have pummeled the Western North Carolina area the past few years, and in one sense, it was the last straw. Loss of almost all the hemlocks, compounded by a devastating pine beetle attack that destroyed most of the rough-bark species of pines, plus several very heavy rain events in addition to the wildfires of 2016 and 2025 opened most of the upper story, allowing more sunlight to reach the ground level. This has resulted in massive vegetative growth last and this spring. Trails that are passable in early spring have, by summer, become overgrown with briars, brambles and low shrubs. In turn, this has put an insurmountable burden on the volunteer trail maintainers of all the trails in the area, not just the BMT, although our experience is typical. Forest Service positions have been cut, plus wild-fire assignments take the professionals away from their jobs at the districts, leaving the general Western North Carolina area with woefully scant resources to meet a greatly increased need.



This spring, we did get some very much needed help in the shape of trained crews from the Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS).

Continued next page

These were financed by hurricane and other mitigation funds from FEMA. A significant amount of funds was used by the USDA/Forest Service to reach contracts with SAWs to provide personnel to address some of the needs. Each of the WNC District Ranger Offices were able to contract for full-time Trail Specialists for a five-year term. In the combined District of Cheoah and Tusquittee, we have two full-time SAWs folks, Jason Doroski and Ryan Stoyer, who were brought on in the spring. Having two very experienced, enthusiastic and well-trained folks has already resulted in some major projects being brought to an acceptable standard of maintenance. Working off an agreed priority list of immediate needs, they have been systematically working in many areas and a lot of that was along the BMT.



In addition, SAWs has both full-time and summer trail crews for especially hard-hit locations. We have been fortunate to have had three crew hitches, with another one scheduled for the end of the month. Each hitch consists of a crew of six, working eight 10-hour days in a row, often camping in the remote back country. Each hitch of eighty hours is a two-week period-of-time, so they generally get six days "off" between hitches. Jason and Ryan work directly in the Forest Service office and work a similar four 10-hour day schedule, but Monday through Thursday. Additionally, since both Jason and Ryan care passionately about Wilderness, they have volunteered to be assigned as Trail Maintainers for Sections 18 b, c and d, Haeo Lead Junction to Yellow Hammer Gap, surely one of the most remote and difficult areas on the entire BMT. We also have one of the trail crews currently planning on working the Naked Ground-Hangover and related sections in early October.



Ryan Stoyer and Jason Doroski

**Bob Bald**

Jason and Ryan will be holding Volunteer Workdays as part of their assignment to the districts, and some of those may be on the BMT, while some may be at other locations. We will announce these through the Newsletter but do need to add that they need folks to sign up for these so that adequate tools, etc. are available. If those trips are along the BMT, rest assured that your hours will count for BMTA swag at the annual meeting, while the work hours will be reported to the USFS by SAWs. We are still working out exact details on some aspects of this, but overall, I think this will be a tremendous boost to our existing maintenance program. If you run into Jason, Ryan or one of the trail crews while hiking, please stop and introduce yourselves and tell them how much everyone appreciates their help.



Hike the Hills of Tennessee

November 5-8, 2026

*For all the latest info
On the Annual Meeting*

**Annual Meeting
Info**

*Sign-Up for the
Hikes of Your Choice*

Hike Sign Ups

*RSVP for the
Awards Banquet*

Banquet



Keep the BMT on the Path to be One of the BEST Trails in the Nation



Your Membership Fees and Donations Provide Funding for

Little Skeenah Gap Bridge
Lost Creek Campground Kiosk
Handrails at Towee Creek
Check Steps at Bushyhead Gap

Fence Maintenance at Fall Branch Falls
Tools
Volunteer Training
Add to the Land Acquisition Fund (LAF)

MEMBERSHIP

DONATE

DONATE LAF

USFS Tool Donation

by Bob Cowdrick

Jules,

On behalf of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association, thank you for the generous donation of tools and personal protective equipment from the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest.

These tools will be put to immediate use maintaining the Benton MacKaye Trail throughout the forest. Having reliable, high-quality equipment enables our volunteers to work more efficiently while helping us provide a safe and enjoyable trail experience for the public.

Safety is one of the key strategic elements of our Association's five-year plan. As much of our existing personal protective equipment has reached the end of its service life, this donation of new PPE is especially meaningful and greatly appreciated. It helps ensure that our volunteers have the protection they need while performing trail maintenance in the field.

We value our strong partnership with the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest and are grateful for your continued support of our mission. Thank you again for investing in the volunteers who care for the Benton MacKaye Trail and for helping us keep the trail safe and accessible for all who enjoy it.

With gratitude,
Bob



The Path Less Traveled

BMTA Membership Campaign - Join us in 2027!

Summer weather is winding down, the days are cooling off, and the trees are about to put on their big fall show. It's one of the best times of year to be on the trail. It's also time to renew your BMTA membership or join us as a new member! BMTA's annual membership campaign begins October 1 and continues through the end of December. Your membership supports BMTA's ongoing maintenance and advocacy for the Benton MacKaye Trail. And this year, every new and renewed member is entered to win a prize – see below!

Membership Options

BMTA offers seven membership levels:

- ◆ Student (\$25)
- ◆ Retired (\$25)
- ◆ Veteran (\$25)
- ◆ Individual (\$30)
- ◆ Family (\$40 for 2 adults + children under 21)
- ◆ Business/Corporate Partner (\$100)
- ◆ Life (\$400 individual; \$600 family)

You also can choose to become a Member by Donation. A \$75 (or more) donation includes an Individual or Family membership. Use one of the links below to join or renew your membership ... or to become a Member by Donation -- donate to the general fund or to the Land Acquisition Fund (LAF)!



Join Early for a Chance to Win

New for this year! Everyone who joins or renews between October 1 and December 31 is automatically entered to win one of three new blue BMTA T-shirts.

Winners choose long or short sleeves in their size. One winner will be drawn on the last day of each month (October, November, and December), and your entry carries over to later drawings. Join in October and you're in all three drawings; join in November and you're in two; join in December and you're in one. One winner per household.

Increase your chances to win: JOIN or RENEW TODAY!

Want to do even more for the trail? Read the companion article in this issue, Give Beyond Your Membership.

[MEMBERSHIP](#)[DONATE](#)[DONATE LAF](#)

BMTA's Big Frog Tour

by Bob Cowdrick with photos courtesy of Barb Childress

A big thank-you to everyone who joined me for the **Tour of Big Frog** and a productive day of trail work! It was great to spend the day with such a fun group, enjoy some good camaraderie, and actually get a little work done along the way.

For those who toured other destinations this past summer, I'm sure you'll agree this was the best experience of the year. Italy, the Camino, Alabama, Newfoundland, Iceland, Scotland, West Virginia, and Ducktown all had their moments—but did they offer **16 chainsaw demonstrations, 6 crosscut saw events, 3 miles of brushing, and sunshine at the end of the tour?** I think not!



Big Frog Tour meets mess!

Extra thanks to my assistant tour guides (Bill Cox, Barry Allen, Steve Hayden, and Patrick Ward) for helping facilitate the day and keeping our highly sophisticated tour operation moving in the right direction.

Those who enjoyed the chainsaw experience included Barb Childress, Dale Fiedler, Ian Guthridge, Ken Cissna, Daphne Martin, Ed Sullivan and Clare Sullivan. They really love seeing those trees come crashing down.

The crosscut event was relished by Samuel Sly, Charles Peel, Laurie Schatz, Steve Bayliss, Johnny Emberson, Steve Dennison. This group was amazed at how many times a saw can become stuck in a cut.

Continued next page



Bill Cox trims and prepares.



Bill Cox focuses.



Bill Cox taking it one step at a time.



Clare Sullivan lopping away!



Dale Fiedler rolling around!



The trail emerges.



The enormity of the task.

Continued next page



Ken Cissna, Dale Fiedler and Bill Cox show off the new Volunteer Trail Crew decal!

Although they did not get to experience the wonderful views from the summit of Big Frog in the clouds, we will save that tour for another day!

Friendship, camaraderie, a few raindrops, and some trail work make for a great tour.

Looking forward to seeing all of you on our next BMTA Trail tour!

Regards

Bob, Your BMTA Big Frog Tour Director

Mr Bones Loves His Blue BMTA Shirt!



Mr Bones is styling in his new blue BMTA shirt! Mr Bones is going to wear his at the BMTA Annual Meeting! Grumpy Pumpkin approves even though he prefers to be grumpy.

Falls Branch Falls and Conasauga Falls Hikes

by Rick Harris with photos courtesy of Brenda Harris

We met at the Cherohala Skyway Visitor Center then drove first to the trailhead for the Conasauga Falls Trail. We hiked down to the falls. The first part was easy, but the last part was very rocky and steep in places. The water flow was quite low due to recent drought conditions, but the falls were still quite beautiful.



At the trailhead for Canasauga Falls. Rick Harris, Mollie May, Stephanie Gordon, Tim Swan, Paula Laws, Ray Laws and Susie Rheault. Nahme is bored and says, "let's go!".



Susie Rheault, Stephanie Gordon, Brenda Harris, Molly May, Paula Laws, Tim Swan, Nahme Harris and Richard Harris. Not pictured is Ray Laws who took the picture.

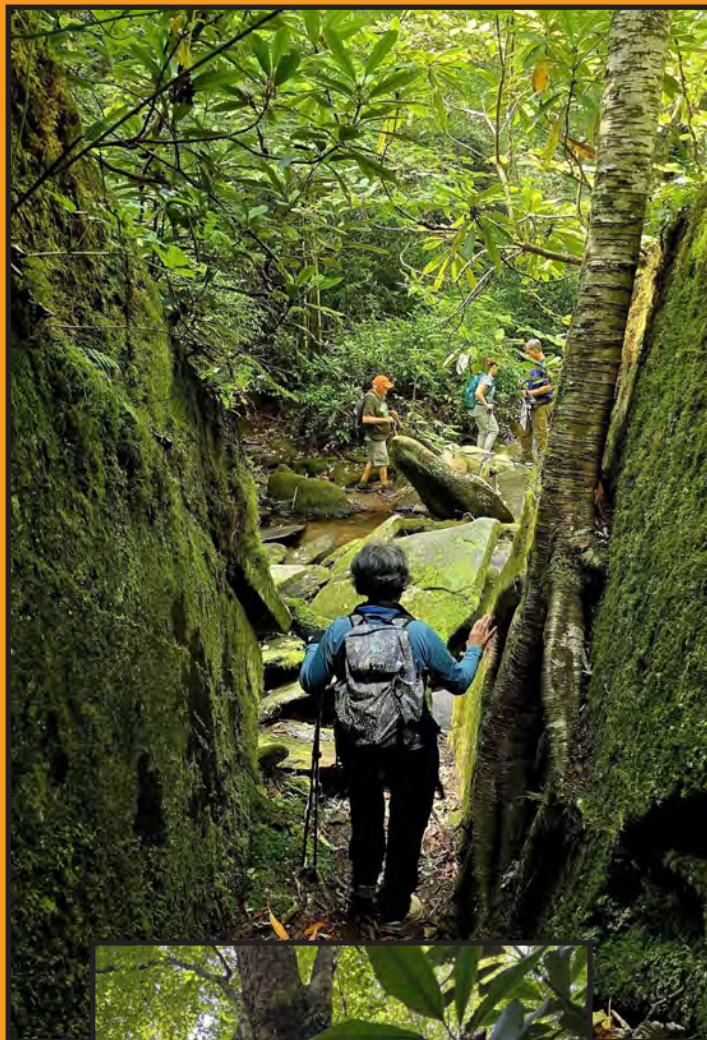
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We then returned to the vehicles and drove back to the visitor center so folks could shop and use the restrooms. We then drove to the West Rattlesnake Parking Area on the Skyway, which is the trailhead for the Falls Branch Falls Trail. We ate lunch there. Then we hiked to the falls, which to say the least was quite challenging. The first half was easy on an old roadbed, but after leaving the roadbed and heading down to the creek, the trail became very steep and rocky with poor footing in most places. Despite the difficulty of the trail, everyone said it was well worth the misery. These falls never disappoint. They are estimated to be about 90 feet high with most of the distance being a sheer drop. Both trails were completely free of logs across the trail and well brushed out, thanks to the volunteer trail crews.



Afterwards, four of us and Nahme went to Tellico Brewing for their award-winning Oktoberfest beer and for snacks from Peach Steet Grill.

The Tellico Brewing Oktoberfest beer won best in the nation in that category at the annual Great American Beer Festival in Denver. The Tellico Plains Oktoberfest was to be held the next day, Saturday, September 19, highlighting this gold-medal beer. But anyone can come to enjoy this award-winning beer later until supplies run out.



Give Beyond Your Membership

Help BMTA keep our trail safe, accessible, and open for everyone.



Every mile of the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT) exists because people show up, whether in person, through membership, by donation, or all three. Every year, BMTA volunteers put in hundreds of hours brushing, removing blowdowns, clearing or adding water diversions, restoring tread, and doing other trail work. Volunteers donate their time -- your gift helps to give them the tools to do the job. This year, go beyond your membership and help put new tools, fuel, blades, materials, training, and safety gear in the hands of our intrepid trail crews. Other projects need funding as well.

Project Materials

Several trail projects are ready to move forward as soon as the materials are funded:

- ◆ A new bridge over Little Skeenah Creek
- ◆ A kiosk at Lost Creek Campground
- ◆ Continuing fence maintenance at Falls Branch Falls
- ◆ Check steps to control erosion at Bushyhead Gap
- ◆ Handrails at Towee Creek

Each of these projects keeps the trail safer and more enjoyable for hikers, families, and volunteers alike.

Investing in the Next Generation

Your gift also can open doors for students. BMTA hopes to hire a summer intern trail crew of six to eight students, who would spend a week tackling more extensive maintenance on a section of the BMT. We would like to bring on several summer trail steward interns to educate visitors about trail care, support our Clean Trail Days initiatives, and staff weekend information booths at key trailheads. Student interns could help us with much-needed upgrades to BMTA's IT infrastructure.

Ways to Give

BMTA makes it easy to give in whatever way works best for you:

- ◆ Cash gifts, online or by check
- ◆ Gifts of stocks or securities
- ◆ Donor-Advised Fund (DAF) gifts
- ◆ IRA Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD)
- ◆ Employer matching programs
- ◆ Become a Member by Donation (for any donation (\$75 and above) you will receive an Individual or Family Membership).

For details on any of these giving methods, visit the link below. Please consider making an extra gift to BMTA this year. And to all our past donors: THANK YOU! Your generosity is the foundation under every bridge, step, and trail section we maintain.

[DONATE](#)

[DONATE LAF](#)

[MEMBERSHIP](#)

Hmm...wonder what the swag and raffle will be this year?

The BMTA Annual Meeting always has the best swag. Here are some from years past. You will have to attend the meeting to see what you can get this year!



Last year Mr Bones won this BMT map!

Let's Make Our Raffle a Huge Success!

One of the most exciting parts of the BMTA Annual Meeting is the opportunity to win some great prizes while supporting a cause we all care about. Many local businesses, members and individual contributors have donated an amazing number of items for this year's raffle. Now it's our turn to show the same support and generosity in raising money for the BMTA Land Acquisition Fund. Please come prepared to purchase a large number of raffle tickets or ticket bundle to give yourself a chance to take home some of these special prizes. We have accumulated over \$5000 in total value! Remember you can't win if you don't enter!

Let's show our appreciation to our donors, support the BMTA, and make this year's raffle one of the most successful ones yet. Go [HERE](#) to see the current prizes!

Your Raffle Coordinators,
Donna Jones and Nancy Barr

REVISED**Nominating Committee Report for Next Year's Board of Directors**

Reported by Ken Cissna

This year's Nominating Committee, charged with proposing a slate of BMTA officers for 2027-2028, consisted of Clare Sullivan, Steve Cartwright, Bob Cowdrick (ex officio) and Ken Cissna.

We are fortunate to continue to have dedicated volunteers who make it possible for the BMTA to continue fulfilling its mission: "To preserve, protect and maintain the Benton MacKaye Trail."

The proposed slate of officers is:

President:	Bob Cowdrick
Vice President:	Kelly Wentworth
Secretary:	Sarah Kennedy
Treasurer:	David Watkins
Georgia Maintenance Director:	Patrick Ward
TN/NC Maintenance Director:	Darrell Sheffield
Smokies Coordinator:	Steve Pruett
Membership Director:	Byron Coker
Communications Director:	Frank Forehand
Conservation Director:	Darcy Douglas
Hiking Director:	Ray Laws

In accordance with the Association's bylaws, the membership previously was notified of the individuals nominated for election to the Board of Directors. At that time, one Board position remained unfilled.

Since that notification, individuals have been identified and have agreed to be nominated for the positions of Treasurer and Tennessee–North Carolina Director of Trail Maintenance. These nominations will be presented to the membership for consideration at the Annual Meeting.

Two other positions are filled by the President (Georgia State Representative and Tennessee/North Carolina State Representative), and three Board filled by a vote of the Board of Directors (Newsletter Editor, Store Manager and Coordinator of Electronic Media). The Immediate Past President completes the Board of Directors.

Thank you to each of you and to the volunteers who assisted in this process.

Voting takes place at the Annual Meeting on November 7, 2026. Nominations may also be made from the floor.

**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.*

Taking on Section 18a

by Bob Cowdrick with photos courtesy of Jason Doroski

There's nothing quite like a day on the BMT when the goal is simple: grab your tools and hit the trail. Twelve BMTA members and guests tackled wilderness Section 18a on September 16th from Beech Gap to Stratton Bald, brushing out 2.5 miles of trail and opening the corridor for hikers to traverse.

Leading the charge was Jason Doroski from our SAWA partner, bringing his expertise, energy, and plenty of trail know-how to the effort. Joining Jason on the crew were Daphne Martin, Ian Guttridge, Charlie Snow, Justin Owe, Tim Williams, Steve Dennison, Shelton Crow, Kathy Gushwa, Brenda Harris, Johnny Emberson, Bob Cowdrick and Dick Evans. It was a great day of hard work, good company, and time spent in the mountains we all love. Every mile we maintain helps keep the Benton MacKaye Trail wild, walkable and ready for the next adventure.

Thanks to the entire crew for getting out there and making a difference—one mile at a time!



Tim Williams, Justin Owe, Daphne Martin, Shelton Crow, Charlie Snow, Ian Guttridge, Jason Doroski, Steve Dennison, Bob Cowdrick, Kathy Gushwa and Johnny Emberson. What a crew!

Wandering Around and Wondering

courtesy of Ray Laws



Thunder Rock Express to the BMT.



Well, this wasn't here the last time! LOL!!

We Love our National Public Lands!

by Clare Sullivan

Saturday, September 26, 2026, was National Public Lands Day (NPLD) – a day dedicated to improving, restoring and celebrating our public lands. In recognition of the day, many National Parks, forest service venues, and wildlife refuges waive fees.

To encourage customers to plan ahead to enjoy the outdoors on the actual day, REI's Kennesaw store invited the Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA) to join them to promote the celebration on September 13, 2026. Other organizations exhibiting at the store were Georgia State Parks, Friends of Kennesaw National Battlefield and EcoSneakers (a recycling company).

REI's Chattanooga store celebrated on September 26, 2026. REI spent a million dollars to promote National Public Lands Day. The store's customers were asked to vote how the funds should be used – for advocacy, education or conservation. They also received NPLD stickers and bandanas.

Organizations exhibiting in Chattanooga were the Cherokee National Forest, the Cumberland Trail, Catalyst Sports (manufactures outdoor equipment for those with disabilities), the Southeastern Conservation Corp. and BMTA.



Clare Sullivan and David Watkins engaging with Smokey the Bear!



Kathy Anderson discussing the BMT with a REI customer.



The October BMT Blog Is Here!

'Fall Through My Lens: Photographing Autumn Along the Benton MacKaye Trail'

*Use the Subscribe Button in the Blog to
Subscribe to the New RSS Feed!*

Frank Benton Yaun

August 17, 1959 – September 22, 2026

by Marge Heller



Frank Benton Yaun, better known as Ben, became a member of the BMTA, along with his wife Carol, in July 2017. At that time, I was Co-Chair of Publicity when I met this creative, remarkable man with a larger-than-life personality. Immediately I knew he was someone special, so Ralph and I met with him at the Waffle House for coffee and to talk. I encouraged him to get involved in Publicity and Ralph Heller, past President, talked about trail maintenance. After that he got involved in both.

Ben became the Section Maintainer for 9c (Pate Gap >> Watson Gap) that same year and later took over Section 10a (Watson Gap » Jacks River Trail) in 2019. Despite noticeable bear activity, Ben frequently went out just to enjoy walking on the trail. Still, he wanted to let the bears know he was coming so he would sing as he hiked or worked ... “Delta Dawn” was one of his favorites.

Ben was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s in 2020. As Ben’s condition worsened, maintaining his section became a family affair -- his wife, Carol Huey and her brother, Chuck Huey, pitched in to help with trail maintenance.

Through the years Ben wore many BMTA hats. While wearing a hard hat in 2019, he put in 298 Hours maintaining the BMT -- just one of several times he became a member of the prestigious 100-Hour Club. Ben also was a natural at manning the BMTA booth at festivals. He would stand in front of the tent projecting his voice for all to hear: “Trail for sale – two for one – one goes in and one comes out”. That expression brought a lot of guests (and future members) into BMTA’s Event Tent.

Ben was a true ambassador for the Benton McKaye Trail and will never be forgotten. Ben is survived by his wife, Carol Huey, and sons Benton and Jesse Yaun. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations go to the Alzheimer’s Association or to the BMTA Land Acquisition Fund.

Services are as follows:

October 8th - Celebration of Life, Acworth, 6 PM.

October 9th - Funeral Mass, St. Ann’s Church in Marietta, 11 AM.



Upcoming

by Ray Laws, Hiking Director

October

October 9-11 Trails Skill Workshop at Vogel State Park.

To register, follow this link: [TSW 2026 Registration](#)

October 9 (Friday) Shady Falls Trailhead to Lake Blue Ridge and back. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Moderate 6 miles. Views of Lake Blue Ridge, including very close up during mid-hike lunch. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at kcissna@bmta.org.

October 9 (Friday) BMT Tellico River to Campsite 11 on Bald River Road. Location: Cherohala Skyway Visitor Center, departure time: 9 AM. This 7-mile hike begins at the Fish Hatchery on Tellico River Rd above Green Cove on the BMT, climbs up Sugar Mountain then down the south side into the valley of the Upper Bald River Wilderness. Once it crosses Brookshire Creek above a small waterfall, we will leave the BMT and continue to follow the Brookshire Creek Trail downstream to come out onto Bald River Road at Campsite 11. There are six stream crossings, so either wear shoes you don't mind getting wet or plan on changing into water shoes at each stream crossing. Since this trail is partly in Wilderness, it will be limited to 12 hikers. Afterwards, we will retrieve our shuttle vehicles and perhaps eat supper in Tellico Plains. What to bring: lunch, water, wading shoes and your dog on leash. Contact Hike Leaders Rick and Brenda Harris (and Nahme, our dog) at rharris@bmta.org.

DAY TRIP Work Trip October 17, 2026

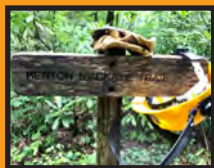
OVERNITE Work Trip October 17-18, 2026

There will be no 2nd or 4th Saturday work trips in October.

There will be an October 20, 2026, Work Trip (Watch your email for details.)

To register contact Brian Trinkle, trinkga@outlook.com or

(678) 215-5276 to sign up for this trip. You Also Can Register [Online](#).



October 20 (Tuesday) North Carolina JKSR Benton MacKaye Volunteer Days SIGN-UP [HERE](#) 10 to 4 PM.

October 23 Young Harris College is offering Heartsaver First Aid CPR AED. The class will be held at Union General Hospital in Blairsville, Georgia from 7 AM to 12:30 PM in Classroom A. For more information and to register go [HERE](#).

October 26 (Monday) Yonah Preserve, 5miles. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at rcollinson@bmta.org.

October 30 (Friday) BMT: Highway 515 to Weaver Creek and return. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Easy 5 miles mostly along dirt roads. One "rock hopping" stream crossing could get your feet wet depending on stream levels and recent rainfall.

Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at kcissna@bmta.org.

October 31 (Saturday) Help Save Georgia's Hemlocks. 9:00 AM until 3 PM.

We will have the chance to save hundreds of these beautiful trees along the Fall Branch Falls Section of the BMT. Meet at Cherry Log Christian Church, 1149 Cherry Log, Cherry Log, Georgia. What to bring: Sturdy shoes, long pants, long-sleeved shirts, lunch and water

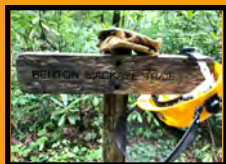
Contact Ken Cissna at kcissna@bmta.org for further information and to sign up.

Continued next page

November

Annual Meeting Hike Fest November 5-8

November 13 (Friday) BMT: Three Forks to Hickory Flat Cemetery on AT and back. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). About 5 moderate miles. Hoping we'll get some nice fall colors. Plus, Long Creek Falls. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at kcissna@bmta.org.



November 14 (Saturday) BMTA GA/TN/NC Maintenance Trip. TBA
Contact the Georgia Maintenance Director at bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org.

November 16 (Monday) Unicoi State Park 5 miles via the Lake Trail, Frog Pond and Bottoms Loop. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at rcollinson@bmta.org.

November 17 (Tuesday) North Carolina JKSR Benton MacKaye Volunteer Days SIGN-UP [HERE](#) 10 to 4 PM.

November 20 (Friday) Unicoi Turnpike National Historical Trail. Location: Coker Creek Welcome Center 10 AM. This 3-mile hike is mostly downhill and is full of history. This is an easy hike, and it will be fun to explore what is left of the CCC Rolling Stones Camp. We will meet at the Coker Creek Welcome Center, leave some vehicles at the bottom of the trail along Joe Brown Highway (a gravel USFS road), then drive to the top of the ridge at Unicoi Gap. We will follow the BMT southbound a quarter mile, then head down the Unicoi Turnpike Trail. This trail is a deep wagon rut which was used extensively first by the Cherokee Indians, then by militia during the War of 1812, then by settlers and gold seekers, and finally by us. The trail was the route to bring the Cherokee out of the NC mountains on the Trail of Tears as well. The Cherokee were kept at nearby Fort Armistead in Coker Creek, then transported to Charleston and down the Hiwassee River to Chattanooga (then called Ross's Landing). From there, the Cherokee walked or went by boat across Tennessee on out to Oklahoma. The deeply entrenched roadbed is sometimes over our head. About halfway down the trail, we enter the area of the old Rolling Stones CCC camp. Much of the campsite area is still easy to explore with lots of stone and cement structures. Once we get off the trail, we will retrieve our vehicles, then probably eat supper at the Blue Line Grill (a partner to the BMTA), a short distance south on TN-68. What to bring: Lunch, water, your dog on leash. Contact Hike Leaders Rick and Brenda Harris (and Nahme, our dog) at rharris@bmta.org.

November 27 (Friday) Amadahy Trail. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Easy / moderate 4-5 miles. Good hike for working off that turkey on the day after Thanksgiving. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at kcissna@bmta.org.

November 30 (Monday) Lake Nottely Dam Trails. Four miles in Blairsville, GA. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at rcollinson@bmta.org.

December

December 4 (Friday) BMT: Dally Gap along the BMT to Jack's River and back to cars. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Moderate 5 miles.
Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at kcissna@bmta.org.



December 12 (Saturday) BMTA GA/TN/NC Maintenance Trip. TBA
Contact the Georgia Maintenance Director at bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org.

December 14 (Monday) Trails of Jack Rabbit in Hayesville, NC.
Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at rcollinson@bmta.org.

December 14 (Monday) Trails of Jack Rabbit in Hayesville, NC.
Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at rcollinson@bmta.org.

December 15 (Tuesday) North Carolina JKSR Benton MacKaye Volunteer Days -- Details TBA 10 to 4 PM.

December 18 (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 18 (Friday) Indian Boundary Lake Loop Trail. Location: Cherohala Skyway Visitor Center, departure Time: 9 AM. This 3.1-mile easy hike around the lake at Indian Boundary Recreation Area is indeed a beautiful hike. The lake will be low, but the views will be panoramic with Flats Mountain in the background. This is a well-groomed trail with 13 bridges over small creeks feeding the lake. It is a busy bike trail by mostly kids during the summer while camping there. But in December, there will probably be no other hikers or bikers. The campground will be closed except for the Overflow Campground. Afterwards, we can eat supper at one of the restaurants in Tellico Plains. What to bring: Lunch, water, your dog on leash. Contact Hike Leaders Rick and Brenda Harris (and Nahme, our dog) at rharris@bmta.org.

December 28 (Monday) Trails at Piney Branch in Murphy, NC.
Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at rcollinson@bmta.org.

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

The deadline for the November Newsletter is Thursday, November 12, 2026.

Thank you!

BMTA Officers 2025-2026

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Vice President	Kelly Wentworth
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Treasurer	Suzie May
GA M/D	Joe Cantwell
TN/NC M/D	Patrick Ward
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