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Points of Interest

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Need Your Help

BMTA Annual Meeting

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Membership

Trail Worker of the Year

Hike Fest

Arkaguah Trail

Hiwassee Work

Impact?

History Hike

GA Maintenance

Cherohala Fest

Upcoming

Trail Store



BMTA Officers 2024-2025

President: **Bob Cowdrick** Vice President: Clare Sullivan Secretary: Jessie Hayden Treasurer: Lydia Burns GA M/D: Joe Cantwell TN/NC M/D: **Patrick Ward** Smokies Coord: Steve Pruett Hiking Director: Kelly Motter Membership: Steve Hayden Communications: Joy Forehand Conservation: **Barry Allen** Past President: Ken Cissna Store: Sue Ricker **Kathy Williams** Newsletter: State Rep GA: **Darcy Douglas** State Rep TN/NC: James Anderson



BMTA Headquarters



The Election Results Are In – We Need Your Help NOW with Our Quest to Have the BMT Designated a National Scenic Trail!

Two bills requesting a feasibility study for the Benton MacKaye Trail are before the House & the Senate. It is imperative for them to be included in this year's End-of-the-Year Legislation.

These bills are bipartisan, non-controversial and NO cost will be incurred by the designation!

Please contact your Congressional Representatives TODAY to let them know you want H.R. 8403 and S. 4352 to be included in End-of-the-Year!

Learn more about our quest <u>HERE</u>.

Get information on contacting your Senators/Representative HERE.



The 2024 BMTA Annual Meeting and Hike Fest

by Clare Sullivan with photos courtesy of Ray Laws, Kathy Anderson, Steve Pruett and Kathy Williams

The Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA) Annual Meeting was held October 31-November 3 at the newly renovated Unicoi State Park Lodge in Helen, Georgia. Colorful autumn leaves floated to the ground as we hiked and enjoyed renewing old friendships and making new ones.

Attendees got their first glimpse of the wide array of items for BMTA's Raffle during Friday night's Complimentary Supper. BMTA's signature blaze was featured in several of the handmade items—a striking stained glass wall hanging courtesy of Mary MacEachron, Six Pond Farm's barn quilt, Lydia Burn's quilted wall hanging and Joanna McNally's lovely painting of the trail. Adri Herman donated a one-of-akind quilt with bright beautiful colors.

Framed trail maps, a backpack, hiking paraphernalia and gift certificates rounded out the great variety of contributions.



The final event for Friday night was BMT Trivia. Four teams competed in the Trivia challenge which included questions on BMTA history, trail facts and maintenance information. Finishing in first place – winning two raffle tickets – was Team "George" (George Owen, Nancy Barr, Beverly Ottinger and Jere Barr). The "Big Show Team" (Ralph Collinson, Shane Morrison, Kathy Anderson and Ed Sullivan) won a \$10 BMTA Store coupon. "Harry's Guys," (Paula Law, Harry Archer, Bob Cowdrick and Ken Cissna) finished in third, taking home some delicious Merciers apples.



Bob Cowdrick summed up the year.

The attendance at the Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet was 65. BMTA President Bob Cowdrick shared comments from his meetings with the Forest Service. He vowed we will continue to be a "Gold Standard 5-Star Association". Cowdrick also recognized past Presidents, George Owen, Darcy Douglas, Ken Cissna, Barry Allen and David Blount.

Frank Forehand received a plaque for five years of service as Membership Director. David Watkins and Nelson Ashbrook received plaques in recognition of their tenures on the Board as Smokies Coordinator and TN/NC Maintenance Director respectively.



Cindy Ward and Sue Ricker manned the store!

Ken Cissna reviewed the history of BMTA's quest to have the BMT designated a National Scenic Trail. A hearing was held in July before the House Subcommittee on Federal Lands for H.R. 8403 – a bipartisan bill in the House of Representatives calling for a feasibility study of the BMT. Cissna said there's hope for a mark-up in November and then the bill will then be included in an omnibus bill by the end of the year. It all depends on the outcomes of the elections.

The next item on the agenda was the election of officers for 2025 – those elected were:

President: Bob Cowdrick Vice President: Clare Sullivan Secretary: Jessie Hayden Treasurer: Lydia Burns

GA Maintenance Director: Joe Cantwell TN/NC Maintenance Director: Patrick Ward

Smokies Coordinator: Steve Pruett Conservation Director: Barry Allen Communications Director: Joy Forehand Membership Director: Steve Hayden

Hiking Director: Kelly Motter

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.

"Forest Fun, A Stroll through the Seasons with Suzy" was the title for featured speaker Suzy Hope Downing's presentation. Her stunning nature photographs of plants, wildlife and scenic landscapes led the audience on a guided tour through the forests.



Downing is a Georgia Naturalist, avid hiker and finds fun in her photography. Some of her slides showed hikers having fun under waterfalls and in creeks.



One of Suzy's stunning photos of the BMT/John Muir Trail of the Hiwassee won a calendar page in the new 2025 Polk County Calendar!

Lydia Burns was named Volunteer of the Year. She has served as Treasurer of the BMTA for four years. Taxes, insurance, the budget, PayPal, invoices, multiple checking accounts and credit cards are just some of her many responsibilities. In addition to managing our funds, she has developed written policies to make sure BMTA's finances are protected and secure.

Patrick Ward was awarded the much-coveted Trail Worker of the Year Pulaski. With 188 hours of maintaining the trail in Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina, Ward is a member of the 2024 100-Hour Club. He maintained the hours database for two years. Ward also is certified in both crosscut and chainsaw. He often goes out between official maintenance trips to clear the trail. He and his wife Cindy maintain Sections 8c McKenny Gap >> Hatley Gap and 8d Hatley Gap >> Fowler Mountain.

Joe Cantwell reported 7,542 hours of maintenance with no injuries this year with a 60 male/40 female ratio of trail maintainers. We currently have 10 newly certified sawyers in crosscut/chainsaw.



Sixty-six trail workers received a gold Maintainer T-Shirt for more than 30 hours maintaining the BMT. Twenty-nine trail workers garnered 100 hours or more maintaining the trail to become members of the 2024 100-Hour Maintainers Club.



Nine hike leaders earned a Hike Leader T-Shirt for having led five hikes during the year. The total mileage for hikes for each of three hike leaders was 50 miles or more, making them members of the 50-Miler Club (Ken Cissna, Ralph Collinson and Steve Dennison).



Six volunteers received hats for over 30 hours of painting white diamonds along the trail.



New this year were awards to honor volunteers who donate so much of their time to BMTA's needs off the trail – running BMTA's online Store, managing financial records, organizing the annual meeting, the newsletter, retail sales and marketing and other clerical endeavors. Eleven members earned a 30-Hour Volunteer T-Shirt while seven members became members of the new 2024 100-Hour Volunteer Club, Kathy Anderson, Betty Ann Archer, Lydia Burns, Joy Forehand, Frank Forehand, Sue Ricker, and Kathy Williams.



This was the fourth year for the Trail Maintainer's Idiosyncrasy Award which recognizes a person for their ... "especially adamant" personal preferences. Ed Sullivan received a mounted steel blade for his adamant use of steel blades and avoidance of string cutters.

To see the complete list of winners, go to:

100-Hour Club – Maintainers

100-Hour Club – Volunteers

30-Hour Volunteer T-shirts

30-Hour Maintainer T-Shirts

First-Time Maintainer Hats

Hike Leader T-Shirts

50-Miler Club



30-Hour Blazer Hats

The 2024 Annual Meeting and Hike Fest was a truly memorable event – filled with lots of laughter and camaraderie, making new friends / renewing old friendships, enjoying the outdoors we love and scrumptious food on a beautiful, warm autumn weekend!



Clare Sullivan would like to thank the following for all their assistance with the Annual Meeting:

Anne Anderson
Kathy Anderson
Betty Ann Archer
Nancy Barr
Lydia Burns
Ken Cissna
Joy Forehand
Ray and Paula Laws
George Owen
Kelly Motter
Mike Pilvinsky
Dave and Sue Ricker
Ed Sullivan
Cindy and Patrick Ward

You guys rock!





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 <u>only</u> the amount of your contribution that is more than the value of the benefit you receive.

Volunteer of the Year Lydia Burns

by Joy Forehand photo courtesy of Ray Laws



Benton MacKaye Trail Association's (BMTA's) Treasurer, Lydia Burns, was named Volunteer of the Year at the 2024 Annual Meeting and Hike Fest held at Unicoi Lodge in Helen, GA.

As treasurer, Lydia's goal has been to create a system that is wellorganized and easy to understand. She has worked tirelessly to set up a series of checks and double-checks to make sure BMTA's finances remain safe and secure.

Burns' early years set the stage for her future careers as a CPA and as an adventurous wanderer on secluded forest trails. Her family's treks to the Adirondacks instilled a love for hiking along mountain pathways. At school, Burns discovered she had a knack for working with numbers. But it is how she reacted to adversity that perhaps became her biggest asset – she is "the girl who never gives up".

In elementary school, Burns was a majorette in a marching band when a car struck the group. A fractured hip made being a majorette impossible. Burns found the drums most appealing, but the band instructor said she was too short. Determined to stay in the band, Burns took up the trumpet and the trombone. When given the opportunity to switch to the drums, Burns didn't hesitate to switch.

In 1994, adversity struck again – another car accident. Doctors said she may walk to the corner and back but that was it. Undaunted, by the dismal prognosis, her focus turned to marathons. Eighteen short months later, she walked the route of the New York Marathon finishing in the 16,000s out of over 32,000 participants. Six more marathons would follow.

When Lydia and her husband, Dave, retired, their goal was to section-hike the Appalachian Trail. They had completed about 300 miles of the long-distance trail when Lydia's painful knees prevented them from continuing. Knee surgery was the only solution.

Rehabbing following the surgery has been a slow process, but the girl who never gives up is not about to quit. Lydia is well on the road to recovery once again and the Burns now have set their sights on hiking the BMT! "The BMT makes me feel like I'm walking on a trail where no one else has walked before – it's pristine – it's like walking through a brand-new garden," said Lydia. "It makes you feel like you're the first one to be on the trail."



Lydia also loves to cook – Shepherd's pie, rum ricky, gevulde speculaas cookies and standing pork pie are just a few of her specialties

An accomplished quilter, BMTAers will remember her donations for the Annual Meeting Raffles – the Hoo's in the Woods Quilt, BMTA T-Shirt Quilt and this year's Family Outing Quilted Wall Hanging.





Memberships & Donations provide tools training and materials to keep the BMT in tip-top shape.

- Membership fees & donations are the primary source of funds for preserving, protecting & maintaining the BMT.
- For a donation of \$50, \$100, \$250, \$500, you will receive an Individual or Family Membership ... or a Business Partnership for 2025.

Memberships purchased after October 1 will be good thru December 31, 2025.

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Trail Worker of the Year Patrick Ward

by Joy Forehand photo courtesy of Ray Laws



Benton MacKaye Trail Association's (BMTA's) outgoing Conservation Director, Patrick Ward, was named Trail Worker of the Year at the 2024 Annual Meeting and Hike Fest held at Unicoi Lodge in Helen, GA.

Ward's family and the Boy Scouts instilled a love for hiking and camping in the young man. He later joined the Army's Signal Corps where backpacking was a "staple".

The memory of a hike on the Appalachian Trial (AT) when he was a Boy Scout stuck with him. He's now been section hiking the AT for about 20 years, averaging 100 miles a year. He has just 220 miles left to reach the AT's northern terminus on Mount Katahdin.

"I've already done what many think is the toughest mile, the Mahoosuc Notch," said Ward. "Actually, some think it's the 'funest' mile to hike. In that mile, you're scrambling over and around boulders, crawling through crevices – just pushing to get through. This took a full hour."

Ward worked with long-time BMTAer Phil Guhl at AT&T. Guhl invited Ward to several company-sponsored work trips on the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT). His very first foray to maintain the BMT was on a routine work trip. Patrick and future BMTAer Shane Morrison were on George Owen's crew running sling blades from Flat Top >> Holloway Gap ... in a thunderstorm. Despite the cantankerous weather, Patrick enjoyed both the trip and the camaraderie.

"I realized as I was getting closer to retiring, I'll need to make sure I'll have activities to interact socially and to stay in shape (physically)," said Ward. "Looking at the trail workers, I saw people, typically older than I was, yet they were going at it (the work) like I do in my own backyard. But the work in my backyard is not nearly as much fun. I decided to start doing what the trail workers are doing."

"Barry Allen was the Georgia Maintenance Director at the time," said Patrick. "He really impressed me with how he could manage without being over-bearing. Barry taught me a lot about being a swamper and using a chainsaw."

When Section Maintainer Steve Bayliss indicated he wanted to move from Section 8e to one in Tennessee, Patrick volunteered to take on the section. But that wasn't all. Ward saw an opportunity that would be even more advantageous for BMTA. He convinced fellow BMTAer Shane Morrison to take on Sections 8e and 8f. Ward and his wife, Cindy, took on Sections 8c and 8d.

Perhaps his most memorable work trip was in Tennessee during the winter. The temperature was in the teens with significant snowfall. Nevertheless, a group of indomitable BMTAers set out on a backpacking trip on 11d and 12a. An additional challenge ... this was Wilderness. The crew had to use crosscut saws to remove the blowdowns. They made good progress both north- and south-bound, but as the crew approached a creek cross-ing, frigid waters in the creek made them turn back.

Always one to look for new approaches for trail maintenance, Patrick made a suggestion about managing the BMT in Tennessee/North Carolina. If BMTA would compile a list of five or six folks to lead work trips, the BMTA would have much better coverage of the area.

Patrick said, "Bob (Cowdrick) called me to say ... 'You know your suggestion about getting people to volunteer for leading work trips in Tennessee/North Carolina? We're doing it. Would you be willing to be the TN/NC Maintenance Director?"

Patrick's answer was "yes".

Patrick is the first to admit he has a lot to learn about the BMT in Tennessee/North Carolina. As the newly-elected TN/NC Maintenance Director, he will have many challenges recruiting volunteers as crew leaders and trail workers to participate on monthly work trips.

An immediate need is for seven <u>Section Maintainers in North Carolina</u>. If you can help, contact Patrick at pward@bmta.org.

Some of the Meeting's Happy Raffle Winners!



Lynette Linn won the stained glass.



Nancy Barr won the "Cave Man Square Dance" quilt.

Kathy Gushwa won the BMT map.

2024 Hike Fest

by Clare Sullivan

The 2024 BMTA Hike Fest was very successful even though there was a big hiccup in the planning. Hike Director, Kelly Motter, had all the hikes planned and assigned. Then Hurricane Helene reared her ugly head and caused the Chattahoochee-Oconee Forest Service to close four of the trails that were on the docket. Motter and the hike leaders quickly came up with solutions to the problem. We were lucky to have gorgeous weather for three days, and a foggy misty day on Sunday.

Thank you to hike leaders Mike Pilvinsky, George Owen, Kelly Motter, Ralph Collinson, Ken Cissna, Ed Sullivan, Rick Harris and Steve Dennison. During the four days, we offered 13 hikes to 71 hikers.

The hikes included:

Mount Yonah

Wetlands Loop Trail at Smithgall Woods State Park

Unicoi Lodge to Hofer's German Restaurant in Helen and back (twice)

Brasstown Bald-Jack's Gap Trail Overlook-Wagon Train Trail Overlook

Martin's Mine Trail at Smithgall State Park

Appalachian Trail from Hogpen Gap

Frog Pond Nature Trail & Bottoms Loop Trail near Unicoi Lodge

Waterfall Medley to DeSota Falls, Helton Creek Falls and High Shoals Falls

Wilscot Gap to Dial Road and Return

Arkaquah Trail at Brasstown Bald to outlook and return



Mt Yonah, a formidable climb that is so worth it! Photo courtesy of Clayton Webster





The stunning double falls at Anna Ruby!



The Unicoi Lake Loop was an easy hike to begin the festivities. It never disappoints!



The Unicoi Lake Loop surprised and delighted hikers with a fungi known as Lawyer's Wig! How unique!

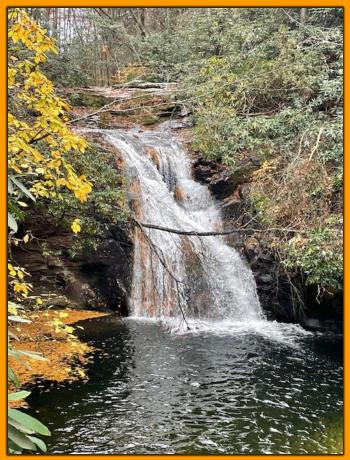




Desoto Falls always a fun hike! Bridge photo courtesy of Ray Laws.





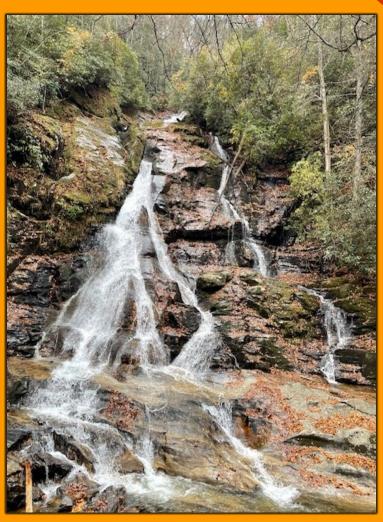


Blue Hole Falls

Continued next page







Undaunted, hikers navigated this blowdown in two places as its canopy also blocked the switchback below on the way to High Shoals Falls. Over, under and in between! The reward was worth the scramble!



Happy to be hiking to Hemlock Falls! Photo courtesy of Steve Pruett.



Taking the road less traveled to Helen!! Photo courtesy of Ray Laws.





Martin's Mine Trail and a really big tree! Gotta hug it! Photos courtesy of Steve Pruett.

Arkaquah Trail at Brasstown Bald

By Rick Harris

On the final day of the BMTA Annual Meeting, Brenda and Rick Harris led a hike on the Arkaquah Trail from the Brasstown Bald parking lot to the overlook, a mile and a half down the trail. Many more were signed up, but most bailed due to the misting rain, cold temps and the desire to get back home after the meeting. But those who went were rewarded with a magical hike in the shrouding mist.







Hiwassee Work

Photos courtesy of Steve Hayden, Bob Cowdrick and Judy Price











Are We Making an Impact?

On October 19, the Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA) hosted our 3rd Annual Clean Trails Day and the results are truly inspiring! The numbers tell the story of the BMTA and the visiting public coming together to preserve and protect our cherished trails.

- 2 BMTA Trailheads cleaned and improved
- 2 Visitors from Minnesota
- 12 BMTA Volunteers Participated
- 42 Volunteer Work Hours logged
- \$151 in donations received

Additionally, Swinging Bridge and Fall Branch Falls saw a combined total of 958 visitors! Specifically:

- **234 visitors** at the Swinging Bridge
- **724 visitors** at Fall Branch Falls

Each of these 958 visitors now has a greater awareness of Leave No Trace (LNT) principles and the Benton MacKaye Trail.

Well done to everyone who contributed! Thanks to your dedication, hundreds of visitors are now more mindful of their impact on the environment. Let's continue this momentum and keep leaving our footprints for generations to follow!

So, are we making an impact? I'll let you answer that question.



These two trail sleuths discovered a cache of dirty baby diapers inside a tree-hollow! Augh!

Supervisors With Tails

by Steve Dennison





Steve Dennison gets approval from two local dogs on John Oudin's Section 8a (Bushy Head Gap). Suspended 50 foot-long tree removed.

History and Hike at Whigg Meadow

by Rick Harris

Six folks from the BMTA and the Cherokee Hiking Club met at the Cherohala Skyway Visitor Center and carpooled to the Mud Gap Trailhead of the Benton MacKaye Trail along the Cherohala Skyway. We hiked to the Whigg southbound on the BMT and ate lunch on the Bald after visiting the old homestead site. We met four college students on the Whigg and four motorcyclists. The views were fantastic on this clear, sunny warm day. Rick shared the local history and Judy Price pointed out several local plants and flowers. After returning to Mud Gap, we also visited the grave of a person killed by the Kirkland Bushwackers during the Civil War. Afterwards, some of us stopped at the Tellicafe for supper.





October 12 GA Maintenance

by Joe Cantwell with photos courtesy of Tim Elmore





The Georgia Maintenance Trip on October 12 included four crews to remove blowdowns on multiple trail sections, and to brush and trim about three miles on Section 3. Thirteen volunteers met at Friendship Baptist Church for the safety briefing. Wildcat Creek Road provided a shortcut opportunity to intersect the trail after a short bushwack up an old logging road.

Shane Morrison and Bill Cox joined sawyer Patrick Ward heading southbound to a complete blockage involving a steep end bind with a split in the butt log. The crew formulated their plan using each element of OHLEC (O-objective, H-hazards, L-lean or bind, E-escape route, C-cutting plan) to safely open the trail. Their second blockage was a very simple top.

Two brushing crews worked in opposite directions from the bushwack intersection. Dave and Sue Ricker, Darcy Douglas, Tim Elmore and Joe Cantwell proceeded southbound for two miles to Wallalah Mountain. Barry Allen, Laurie Shatz and Judy Norton worked northbound. Barry had noticed an old road that crosses the trail at the campsite near Licklog Mountain. They explored this road on their return trip to Wildcat Creek to determine if it could save some mileage on future trips.

The second saw crew, Gilbert Treadwell and Ken Cissna, drove to Wilscot Gap and removed four blowdowns on Section 4b. They then drove to Old Dial Road to cut one tree southbound on Section 5c, and another one northbound on Section 6a.

Thanks to the 115 hours of volunteer time on this trip, the trail is in outstanding condition for our fall hikers to enjoy. I also want to thank those individuals who scouted and worked the trail after Hurricane Helene. As a result, 71 miles of the Georgia BMT are now clear with the remainder to be addressed on the November trip.

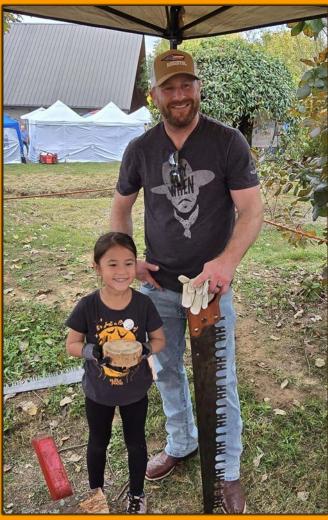
Cherohala Skyway Festivities by Rick Harris

BMTA had its customary booth at the Cherohala Skyway Festival held behind the Visitor Center and the Museum in Tellico Plains. The weather was perfect at the start of the day. Then clouds rolled in, and by the end of the day we were packing up in a sprinkle. But that did not keep the crowds away. Masses of folks came out. Nine folks helped at the booth (Rick and Brenda Harris, Bob Cowdrick, Ed and Clare Sullivan, Ken and BJ Andrews, Barb Lewinski and Deborah Hogsten).

Our booth was an interactive booth. We had dozens of kids and several grown-ups try their skills with a crosscut saw. Our booth was located next to the USFS booth and the Kidz Zone that featured a climbing wall and various blow-up thingies, so there were lots of kids to grab and bring over to our booth to try out their sawing skills.

All day long, we could hear the Bluegrass music in the background. Food and crafts were everywhere. One of the best food items was the Ale 8 Ed Sullivan brought for me. I love Ale 8. It is a root beer drink from Kentucky we would always drink after a day of exploring caves or backpacking the Red River Gorge with our Boy Scout Troop. Of course we paired it with pizza!





Upcoming

by Kelly Motter, Hiking Director

November

November 20 (Wednesday) Wagon Train Trail. Out and back for a total of 4 easy miles and fantastic views of Brasstown Bald. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at rcollinson@bmta.org.

November 20-22, 2024. North Georgia Crosscut Course

All participants must have current First Aid and CPR certifications. For more information go HERE.



November 23 (Saturday) TN/NC Maintenance Trip. Sections 18b & c. Contact the TN/NC Maintenance Director at bmtatn-ncmaintdirector@bmta.org.

November 29 (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.

December

December 2 (Monday) Piney Knob Gobbler. Moderate 5.1 miles. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at reollinson@bmta.org.

December 6 (Friday) Turtletown Falls. Moderate 4 miles. A loop trail that follows Turtletown Creek and loops back to Shinbone Ridge. Scenic views of the Hiwassee River in addition to overlooks of two major waterfalls. Turtletown Falls is approximately 30 feet high. Lower Turtletown Falls is 40 feet high. Contact Hike Leaders Clare and Ed Sullivan at csullivan@bmta.org

December 9 (Monday) 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 14 (Saturday) BMTA GA Maintenance Trip. Section 9 (Tentative) Contact the Georgia Maintenance Director at bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org.

December 20 (Friday) Fightingtown Creek #3. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Easy to moderate 4 miles. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at kcissna@bmta.org.

December 27 (Friday) Boyd's Gap to Thunder Rock Campground. Moderate 6 miles, mostly downhill. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at recollinson@bmta.org.

January

January 1 (Wednesday) BMT/AT Upper Loop at Springer Mountain. Bring in New Year's Day with a great hike to an iconic mountain! Hike from Big Stamp Gap to Springer Mountain on the BMT. See the southern terminus of the BMT and the southern terminus of the AT. Then follow the AT north to the intersection with the BMT and return to Big Stamp Gap. A moderate hike of about 5 miles. The 1st mile and a half is uphill. Contact Hike Leader Mike Pilvinsky at mpilvinsky@bmta.org.

January 6 (Monday) Old Copper Road Trail. Easy/Moderate 4.6 miles. Fairly smooth and flat. Built by Cherokee laborers in 1851 to haul copper from Copperhill to Cleveland, Tennessee. Goes back to the current put-in for the Upper Ocoee raft trips.

Contact Hike Leaders Clare and Ed Sullivan at csullivan@bmta.org

January 8 (Wednesday) Piney Knob Rhodo-Coaster Trail. Moderate 5 miles. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at rcollinson@bmta.org.



January 11 (Saturday) BMTA GA Maintenance Trip. TBA Contact the Georgia Maintenance Director at bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org.

January 20 (Monday) Brush Creek Loop. Moderate 5 miles. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at rcollinson@bmta.org.

January 24 (Friday) BMT Wilscot Gap Old Dial Road. Strenuous 11.2 miles. Contact Hike Leader Steve Dennison at sdennison@bmta.org.

January 25 Deadline for Reservations for the BMTA at The Len Foote Hike Inn on Tuesday, February 25, 2025. Reservations cannot be made online for the BMTA held rooms. Rooms will be half-price. Call 706-344-1547 Mon- Friday 8:30 AM-2:30 PM.

Mount LeConte five-person cabin available for BMTA members for July 16, 2025!

BMTA member Clayton Webster won the lottery for Mount LeConte for next year. He has 13 people going, and is making his five-person cabin available to members of the BMTA. To take advantage of this rare opportunity to stay at this rustic backcountry lodge in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, please contact Clayton Webster at webs4740@bellsouth.net or 678-925-1091 to learn the details. This would be a great way for five men to go together, five women to go together, or a family of five to go.

The cost for the five-person cabin is \$1,040.88, which comes to \$208.18 per person. Payment needs to be made soon, so Clayton needs to be contacted ASAP if you want to take advantage of this rare opportunity.

To access our website calendar, go **HERE**.





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Happy Thanksgiving from Mr Bones and the BMTA!

The deadline for the December Newsletter is Wednesday, December 4. Thank you!