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**BMTA Headquarters**

# Benton MacKaye Trail Association

VOLUME 42, ISSUE 7

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## Marking Day in The Smokies

by Marty Dominy

In the second week of May 2005, a number of Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA) members and others identified as "The Old Pros" gathered in North Carolina for some hiking on the Appalachian Trail, the Mountains-to-Sea Trail and other trails. Despite a full week of hiking, some energy needed to be reserved for the weekend. Dick Evans had put forth a decree that all loyal BMTA members set all other business aside to help mark the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT) in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Marty Dominy had been in Virginia on Friday before traveling to Cherokee for the night. Arrangements had been made for BMTA members to spend the night in some Kamping Kabins at a KOA campground. Marty, complete with a queasy stomach, arrived about dark to a damp, cool campground. After a fitful night with little sleep, he forced down breakfast and joined others at the assembly point to listen to Dick pass out assignments. The orders were clear: two people in each group would hike a specified route with a pair of battery-powered drills, pre-cut and pre-assembled carsonite strips with three-inch-by-three-inch BMT and arrowhead decals affixed, and a jar of wood screws. Upon reaching any trail intersection along the route, each crew would mount the appropriate carsonite strip to the signpost underneath the existing trail signs.

The National Park Service (NPS) had clearly communicated that the BMT name would not be added to trail signs until the useful life of each sign had been reached. With hundreds of trail signs throughout the park, it would be cost prohibitive to replace every trail sign at every intersection along the BMT. After considerable discussion, the proposal to use decals on a carsonite strip attached to the existing signpost was approved.

The NPS then asked about a schedule for implementation, thinking it would take several months. Dick responded that it would take two weeks. Superintendent Dale Ditmanson just about spit out his coffee and told Dick, "You're on!"

Dick first considered placing the markers as part of a backpack of the entire route through the park. Then, he realized he could do it as day hikes with the support of transportation at the start and the end of the day. This idea evolved into getting a group of others to do the work all in one day. At that point, Dick put together the logistics plan for marking day.

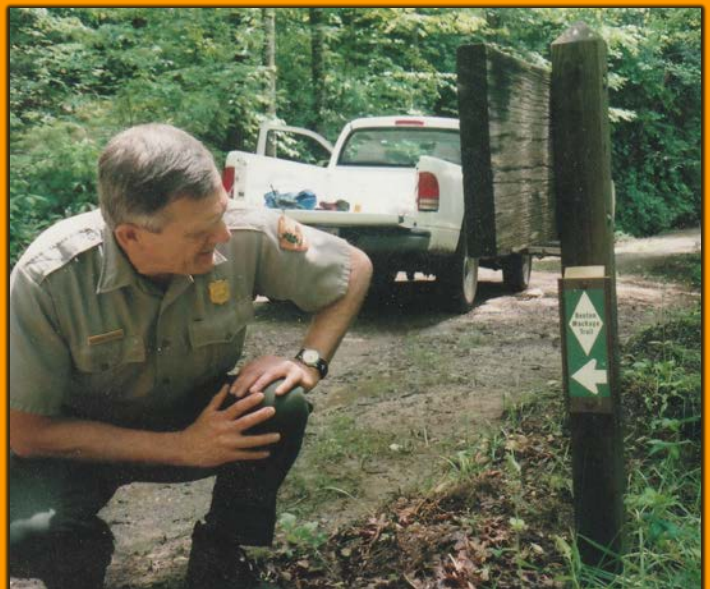
Those who arrived on May 14, 2005, for the work trip were in for a different kind of briefing. Individuals didn't pick the section of the trail they liked; Dick had already paired volunteers, determined which vehicle would take them to the trailhead and knew at what time and place they were to be picked up at the end of the day. Most groups were expected to cover at least 10 miles.

Beginning at the east end of the park, the first group would leave Mount Sterling Gap, place markers [at the intersection of?](#) Mount Sterling and Pretty Hollow Gap, then return to Mount Sterling Gap. The second group would depart from Round Bottoms on Straight Fork, installing markers at two junctions along the Balsam Mountain Trail. Group #3 left from the same point to place markers at the departure from the road and at the intersection of the Beech Gap Trail and Hyatt Ridge Trail. Marty was paired with David Blount in the fourth group to place markers at the intersections of the Hyatt Ridge Trail and the Enloe Creek Trail, the Enloe Creek Trail and the Hughes Ridge Trail, the Hughes Ridge Trail and the Chasteen Creek Trail, the Chasteen Creek Trail and the Bradley Fork Trail and the Smokemont Bypass Trail.

West of Newfound Gap Road, Group #5 would descend the Thomas Divide Trail and place markers at the intersections with the Newton Bald Trail and the Mingus Creek Trail before reaching Smokemont via the Newton Bald Trail. The next group took care of signing the trail intersections along Deep Creek. Further west, a group hiked from Clingman's Dome Road along Noland Divide and Noland Creek to the Road to Nowhere (Lake Shore Drive). The next group signed the easternmost parts of the Lakeshore Trail in the Forney Creek area. The westernmost group entered at Twentymile Creek Ranger Station and signed everything over to Eagle Creek before exiting the trail just north of Fontana Dam. Dick had earlier signed the intersection near Hazel Creek and other intermediate sites along the Lakeshore Trail by crossing Fontana Lake in a boat.

David and Marty were relieved to see a bridge over Straight Fork since it was a torrent on that day. Shortly thereafter, the sole on one of David's boots became partially detached. Neither he nor Marty had any duct tape on them, so the sole was destined to flop loosely for the rest of the day. They saw nobody else until they encountered a couple of sets of backpackers on the Hughes Ridge Trail. After a leisurely lunch at Campsite #48, they finished their work and entered Smokemont Campground. About that time, the heavens opened up with heavy rain, lightning and thunder. David and Marty sought shelter under the eave of a comfort station. When the rain subsided somewhat, they continued on. Dick was waiting at the entrance to the campground and chided the two for being fifteen minutes behind schedule.

At the end of the day, all but three intersections of the BMT in the Great Smoky Mountains were marked. Some of the participants who wondered what they were getting into at the start of the day were relieved to be out safe and sound. Nonetheless, they had the sweet satisfaction of having participated in a remarkable effort that put that finishing touches on the BMT just two months before the official completion ceremony at Mud Gap. George Minnigh, Backcountry Management Specialist for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, joined Dick to witness the placement of a final marker at Noland Creek. A couple of intersections that were not marked on the planning map were marked in the following week. In the end, the NPS was impressed with the performance that showed capability and reliability at a level that was rare to their point of view.





## BMTA's 2025 Annual Meeting & Hike Fest Accommodations

Don't miss the 45th Anniversary of the BMT

Make Your Reservations NOW!

Go to [LODGING](#).



Hike Fest Headquarters:

Lands Creek Log Cabins

October 30—November 2, 2025



Inside the pavilion at Lands Creek Log Cabins.



## BMTA Celebrates National Trails Day with Tools, Teamwork and Tacos

by Bob Cowdrick with photos courtesy of Bob Cowdrick, Brenda Harris, Dara Denning and Clare Sullivan

On Saturday, June 7, 2025, 22 dedicated Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA) members and guests came together to celebrate National Trails Day by giving back to the trail they love. Volunteers split into three crews and tackled blowdowns and overgrowth along the BMT from Kimsey Highway south to Thunder Rock Campground—an effort that showcased not only their dedication but also the legacy of traditional trail work tools.



Veteran BMTA trail maintainer Joe Cantwell took time to explain the history and proper usage of each traditional tool being used during the BMTA's National Trails Day event—crosscut saws, Pulaskis, loppers and swing blades. His insights connected volunteers to the generations of trail workers who have maintained wilderness paths without the use of gas-powered tools, reinforcing BMTA's commitment to preserving both the BMT and tradition.



Daphne Martin and Elizabeth Weikert get credit for sawing a 20" pine on the BMT in the Little Frog Wilderness.



Crosscut to the wilderness!

Using crosscut saws, pulaskis, loppers and swing blades, crews cleared the path while honoring the heritage of wilderness hand tools and the volunteers who wielded them. Along the way, they met three hikers enjoying the BMT, including Mike Finsel, a BMTA section hiker, who commented, *"The BMTA is in excellent shape,"* and thanked the crews for their ongoing efforts. Two other day hikers expressed appreciation for the trail's condition and inquired about how to get involved—an encouraging reminder that volunteer work inspires others.

Continued next page





Steve Dennison, Charlie Snow, Kathy Gushwa, Brenda Harris and Rick Harris are ready to take on anything!



Determined



Persistent



Results





Uh-oh. It's getting away! Crawl faster!



Just a little touch more...



The immense challenges are taken on, one saw at a time.

Continued next page





Patrick Ward, Dara Denning, Daina Denning, Barb Childress and Barry Allen have everything they need.

The celebration was made even more special by the participation of Devon Douglas and Brittany Alvarez, Recreation Technicians with the USFS Oconee District, who joined the crews. Their presence highlighted the strong partnership between the Forest Service and BMTA volunteers in protecting and maintaining the trail.

After the tools were stowed away and the work was done, volunteers gathered for a well-earned lunch courtesy of Jeff and Lori Patterson who treated the crews to a delicious taco bar. It was a fitting end to a day that combined hard work, camaraderie and the shared mission of keeping the Benton MacKaye Trail a welcoming path through the Southern Appalachians.

National Trails Day reminds us of the power of stewardship—and on this stretch of the BMT, that spirit was alive and well.





## BMTA's 2025 Annual Meeting Raffle

Saturday, November 1, 2025



### HIKE INN



Barn  
Quilt by Jessie  
Jessie Hayden



Etowah Gear  
Backpack  
Jess Morgan



Paintings of the  
BMT by Joanna  
Joanna McNally



Framed  
Photograph  
Suzy Downing

### Proceeds go to BMTA's Land Acquisition Fund

Tickets available  
at the meeting!  
\$10 each or 3 for \$25  
7 for \$50  
16 for \$100



Handmade  
Quilt by Adrie  
Adrie Herman



Handmade  
Wooden Item by  
Patrick  
Patrick Ward



Mystique  
Backpacking Tent  
David Watkins

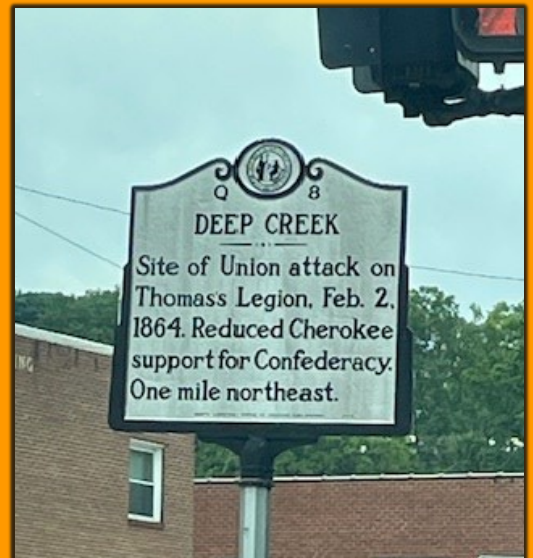
Celebrate the 45th Anniversary of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association

BMTA's Annual Meeting & Hike Fest

October 30-November 2 in Bryson City, North Carolina



Donated or created by BMTA Member.



Don't miss the charm and legacy of Bryson City, North Carolina, the site of the BMTA Annual Meeting & Hike Fest!



# June Maintenance Trip Recap

by Joe Cantwell

## Celebrating National Trails Day

The June Maintenance Trip, held in conjunction with the American Hiking Society's National Trails Day, offered a unique opportunity for the public to explore the tools and techniques our ancestors employed in wilderness maintenance.

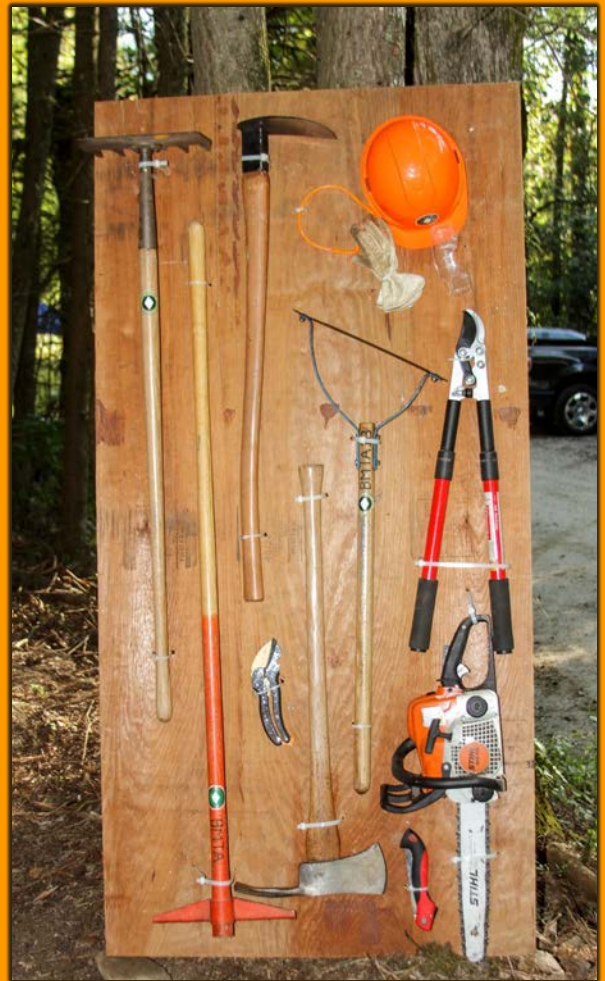
This event was designed not only to celebrate trail stewardship but also to connect participants with the rich history of traditional tools.

## Safety Briefing and Historical Context

Joe Cantwell led the safety briefing, blending it with an insightful recount of the history and proper use of classic tools, including the crosscut saw, Pulaski and swing blade.

These tools, which have played a pivotal role in preserving trails and wilderness areas, were demonstrated to emphasize their importance and safe handling.

The briefing set an educational tone for the day, equipping all participants with the knowledge necessary for effective trail maintenance.



## Volunteer Efforts

The event saw the participation of 22 seasoned volunteers, all experienced maintainers, who contributed their skills and dedication to the effort. Thunder Rock Campground served as the base of operations, providing a central hub for organizing the day's activities. From this base, the volunteers were divided into four crews, each tasked with specific responsibilities in the Little Frog Wilderness, focusing on BMT Sections 12a and b.

- ♦ **Crew 1**– Under the leadership of Ian Guttridge, Ed Sullivan and Elizabeth Weikert, focused on clearing blowdowns that obstructed trail paths. Using crosscut saws and silky saws, they worked diligently to ensure the trails were safe and accessible for hikers. Their efforts demonstrated a mastery of traditional tools and a commitment to preserving the natural beauty of the wilderness.
- ♦ **Crew 2**– Coordinated by Bob Cowdrick and assisted by Daphne Martin and Joe Cantwell, completed two sections of tread repair. Laurie Schatz brushed along the trail. Crews 1 and 2 joined forces at the end of the day to work on a 30-inch blowdown.
- ♦ **Crew 3**– Led by Rick Harris drove from Thunder Rock to Kimsey Highway to clear the trail from Dry Pond Lead northbound to Deep Gap. Brenda Harris, Kathy Gushwa and Charlie Snow joined in the various tasks to greatly improve the trail.

Continued next page

- ♦ **Crew 4**— Led by Patrick Ward and assisted by Barry Allen, Dara and Diana Denning, Barbara Childress and Steve Dennison committed to the longest hike of the day from Kimsey Highway back to Thunder Rock. Joe had scouted this section on Tuesday afternoon and listed all known blowdowns for this crosscut team to work on. However, storms on Thursday and Friday seriously changed the landscape, creating three more serious blowdowns. Rather than pull off at the appointed return time, the crew pushed through spending 8.5 hours on the trail. Their dedication and hard work greatly improved the experience for future hikers.

Back at Thunder Rock, the returning crews were greeted with a wonderful Taco Feast coordinated by David Watkins and prepared by Lori and Jeff Patterson. Forest Service Trail Technicians, Devon Douglas and Brittany Alvarez, were able to join us as they made their rounds for the Ocoee Ranger District. The crews were hot and tired, but this delicious meal with all the trimmings renewed their enthusiasm and gave them time to reflect on the importance of these monthly trips. A sincere Thank You from the BMTA to Lori and Jeff and David!

### **A Day of Collaboration and Stewardship**

The June maintenance trip was not merely a day of labor; it was a celebration of collaboration, history and the enduring commitment to trail stewardship. Volunteers worked together seamlessly, showcasing a shared dedication to maintaining the trails and wilderness areas that provide solace and adventure to countless individuals. This event highlighted the importance of connecting with the past while looking toward the future of conservation and trail maintenance. Symbolizing the spirit of National Trails Day, the June maintenance trip, with 180 volunteer hours, cleared 28 blowdowns, brushed 5.6 miles of trail and repaired 105 feet of tread.



## **Vets for BMTA**

### *A Celebration to Honor Their Service*

October 31, 2025 at

BMTA's Annual Meeting & Hike Fest

Deep Creek entrance to the  
Great Smoky Mountains National Park  
Bryson City, NC

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*An anonymous donor will donate \$10 for every veteran who is a BMTA member and a \$25 donation for every BMTA member who attends the Annual Meeting and Hike Fest to a veterans' 501c3. The veterans are to decide which 501c3 will receive the donation.*

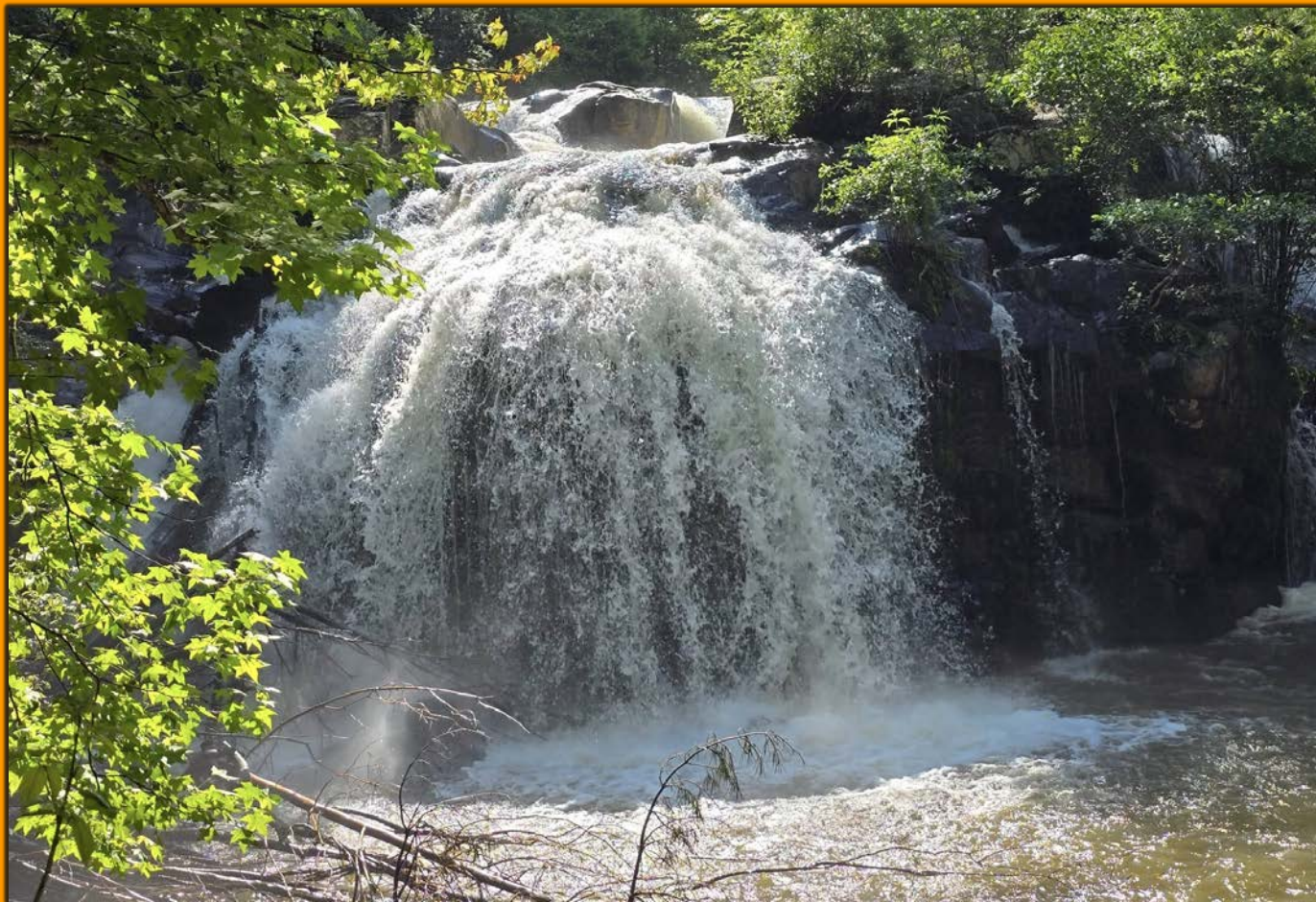
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*If you are a veteran, please complete the*  
[Veteran's Survey](#).



## Turtletown Falls, a Gem Deep in the Forest

Photos courtesy of Brenda Harris







## Summer Safety on the Benton MacKaye Trail

by Bob Cowdrick

Summer is a beautiful time to enjoy the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT)—lush green canopies, blooming wildflowers and long daylight hours offer memorable hiking opportunities. But, with the beauty of summer comes a need for extra caution. Whether you're out for a quick day hike or a multi-day trek, keeping safety in mind ensures an enjoyable experience for all. Here are a few seasonal reminders for staying safe on the BMT:

### Heat & Humidity – Stay Hydrated

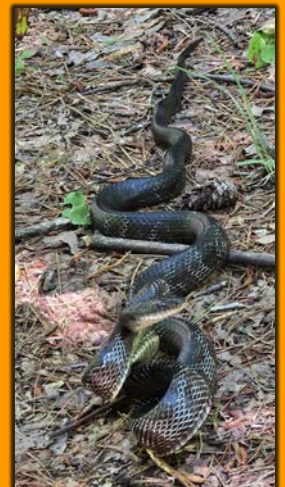
Summer heat can sneak up on you fast. Carry more water than you think you'll need and sip often, even if you don't feel thirsty. Electrolyte-rich drinks can also help replace what you lose through sweat. Take breaks in the shade to cool down.



Mr Bones did not pack enough hydration for his hike.

### Snakes – Watch Your Step

Snakes love to bask in sunny patches of the BMT. Most are non-venomous and want nothing to do with hikers but always be aware of where you step or place your hands. Avoid walking through tall grass or stepping over logs without checking what's on the other side.



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### 🌿 **Poison Ivy – Leaves of Three, Let It Be**

Poison ivy thrives along sunny trail edges. Learn to recognize it—clusters of three pointed leaves—and try to avoid brushing up against vegetation. Wearing long pants can help reduce contact. If you think you've been exposed, scrub the area with soap and cold water as soon as possible.



### 🦋 **Ticks – Check Often**

Ticks are active in the warm months and can carry illnesses such as Lyme disease. Use insect repellent, wear light-colored clothing to spot them more easily, and do thorough tick checks after your hike, especially around the ankles, behind the knees and along the waistband.

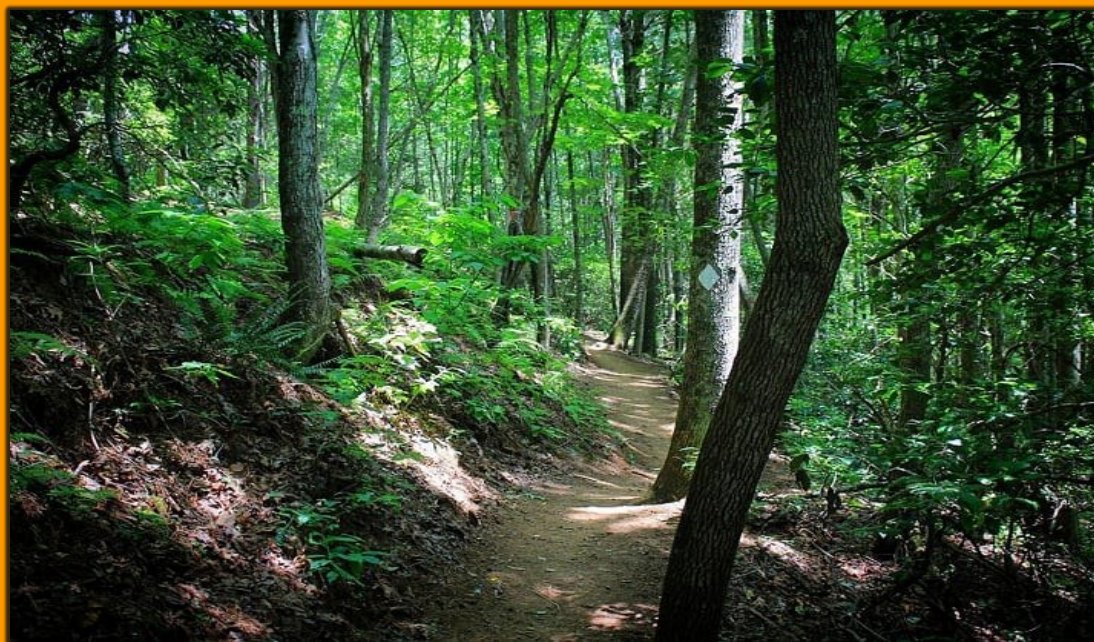


### 🧴 **Sunscreen – Protect Your Skin**

Even on tree-covered sections of the BMT, you'll find yourself exposed to sun. Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen before your hike and reapply as needed, especially on high-exposure areas like the nose, ears and neck.

### 🗺️ **Prepare and Plan Ahead – Let Someone Know**

Before heading out, study your route, check the weather, and pack accordingly. Always tell someone your hiking plans, expected return time, and which trailhead you're starting from. A little planning goes a long way in ensuring a safe return.



**Stay safe, stay smart and enjoy your summer hikes on the BMT.  
Let's leave a healthy footprint for generations to follow!**

## Greetings and thanks to those who braved "The Heart of Darkness"!

by Patrick Ward with photos courtesy of Clare Sullivan, Anne Anderson and Steve Dennison

In preparation for the TN/NC July 2025 Maintenance Trip I thought perhaps I should read the guidebook, but which one? Well, I chose "Heart of Darkness" by Joseph Conrad thinking I might find some helpful tips. What I found had me a little concerned to begin with as we approached the day of the trip. A quote like this raised an eyebrow - *"The reaches opened before us and closed behind, as if the forest had stepped leisurely across the water to bar the way for our return. We penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness. It was very quiet there."* Oh my! What had we gotten ourselves into?

I am glad to report it was a beautiful day on the BMT in the woods. Yes, it was hard work and some of it was quite daunting. However, I am additionally pleased to report that the volunteers brought with them a measure of light that has overcome "The Heart of Darkness".



Tool prep to make sure we escape the Heart of Darkness!



Snake gaiters for all that slithers within the Darkness!

Our sign replacement and Beaverdam Bald approach trail crew started early by replacing the aging sign at Sled Runner Gap with a brand-new guidepost. It shines as a beacon of hope as hikers exit the "Heart of Darkness" heading NOBO. Thank you, Daphne Martin and Laurie Schatz!

Our crew coming out of Sandy Gap heading north took on not only the awkwardly steep slopes up to Hazelnut Knob but also cleaned out the Moss Gap Campsite that provides a respite to hikers before entering "The Heart of Darkness." Thank you, Anne Anderson, Steve Cartwright, Steve Dennison, Jerry Hauck, Clare Sullivan, Kathy Gushwa and Kenny Martin!

Our crew coming in from Beaverdam Bald and heading southbound worked into the heart of the beast parting the way through extremely thick briars and brush. Thank you, Barry Allen, Joe Cantwell, Daniela Diefenbach, Shane Morrison, Ed Sullivan, Darrell Sheffield and Patrick Ward!

Perhaps our favorite crew was two who shuttled trucks from Beaverdam Bald to Sandy Gap eliminating the end of day shuttle....they also set up an awesome end of the day Chow Time with custom sandwiches, "your pick" chips, ice cold drinks and yummy cookies....you two ladies brought a great deal of light and joy and hope to "The Heart of Darkness". Thank you, Cindy Ward!





**Marching into the Darkness.**

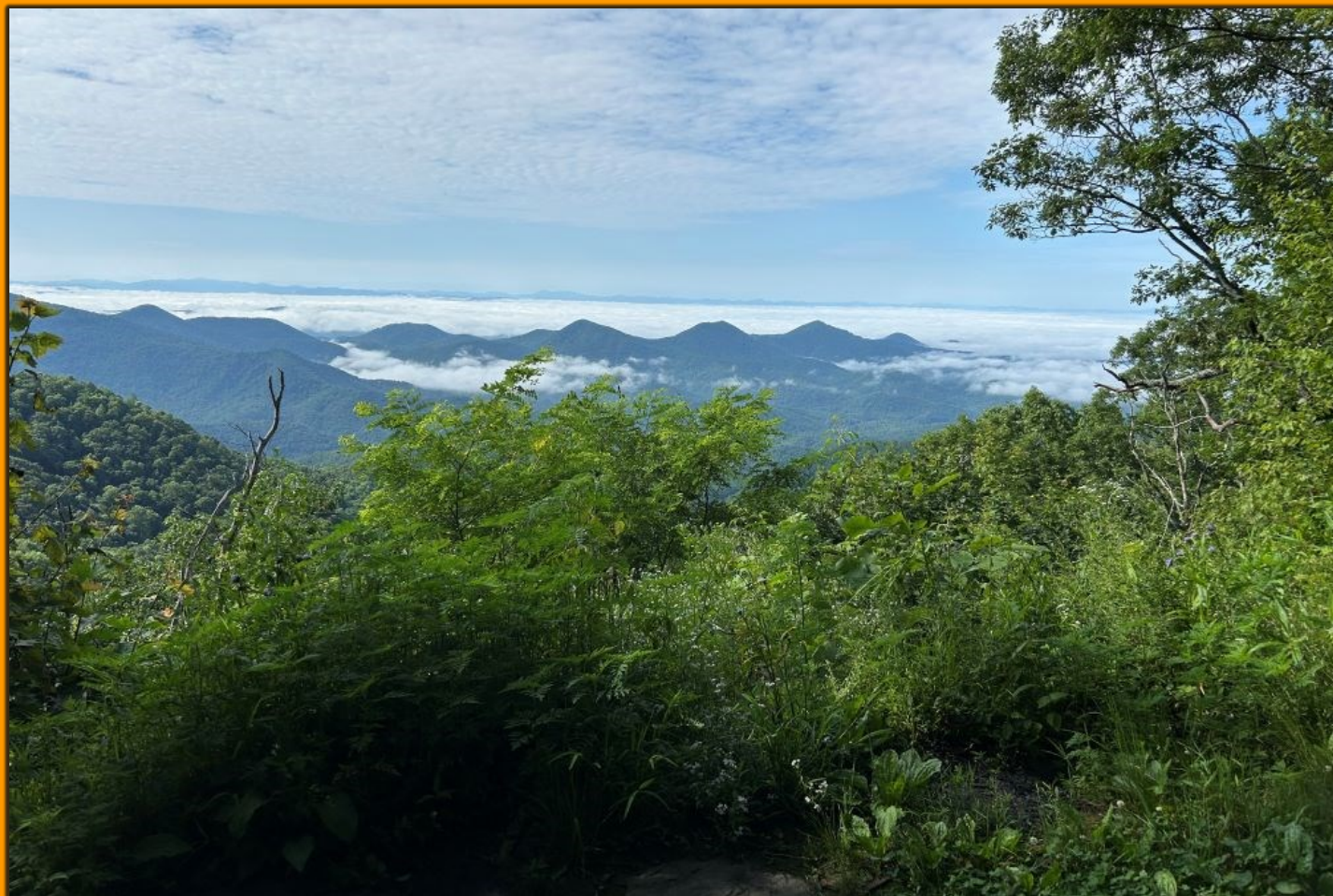


**Dwarfed in the Darkness.**



**Steve Dennison deep into the Heart of Darkness with only a blaze to guide him.**





The view from Beaverdam Bald. Above the Darkness.

At this point and for the next month or so a hiker might be deceived into thinking '*does "The Heart of Darkness" really exist?*'...it does, our friend, it does! For now, the "The Heart of Darkness" is a little brighter after 17 hearty souls of the BMTA (who traveled and worked 233 combined hours) brought their enthusiasm, hard work and desire to provide a trail for generations to follow.

Thanks again all...privilege to work alongside you, Patrick



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

*'Backcountry Camping on the BMT in the  
Great Smoky Mountains'*





## 2025 PNTS Trail Apprentice Program Now Open!



**2025 Trail Apprentice Program opens July 2 and will close on July 21.**

The 2025 Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) Trail Apprentice Program will provide workforce training to young leaders interested in a career in recreation, natural resource management, conservation, environmental studies, history, or a related field, by providing the opportunity to attend the [2025 National Trails Lands Summit and Training](#) and by offering leadership development, career exploration, networking and educational opportunities amongst the National Trails community.

In 2025, a group of Apprentices will build leadership skills by working with PNTS on a project. The projects may involve developing skills in communications, social media, fundraising, advocacy and policy, programs, and more. Apprentices will provide valuable perspectives to PNTS work and leave the program with hands-on experience and a greater knowledge of priority issues in the trails community.

This program is for emerging leaders who:

- Want to build skills in research, public speaking, social media, communications, fundraising, advocacy and policy, or project management.
- Are interested in learning more about National Scenic and Historic Trails.
- Are able to dedicate 10 hours a month to attending virtual sessions and working on completing a specific project.
- Want to build connections with other young professionals in the program and those in the trails and public lands community.
- Are able to travel to and attend the 2025 National Trails Lands Summit and Training in San Antonio, Texas from October 19-24th, 2025.
- Are interested in gaining knowledge and skills in trail corridor protection, land acquisition, land management and stewardship, and community engagement;
- Would benefit from building their professional network and building relationships with professionals in the trails, conservation and public lands field.
- Are interested in exploring different career paths and building their resume.

The program is intended for those aged 20-28 but those aged 18-30 are welcome to apply if they feel they would be a good fit for the program.

For more information on this program, you can visit our webpage [here](#).



# Understanding Social Capital of the BMTA: The Power That Grows When Spent

By Bob Cowdrick

In economics, we're taught to think of *capital* as something tangible—tools, machines, and infrastructure—things that help us produce goods or services. A shovel helps dig. A computer helps compute. These are *capital tools*.

Then there's *human capital*, which refers to the knowledge and skills people possess to use those tools effectively. A Pulaski in the hands of someone who knows how to use it builds and clears a trail. A computer in the hands of a skilled BMTA volunteer becomes a means to create maps, coordinate work trips, or track member support. Human capital turns potential into productivity.

But there is a third form of capital that's often overlooked—*social capital*. And it might be the most powerful of them all.

## What is Social Capital?

Social capital is the trust, networks, and relationships between individuals and communities that enable cooperation for mutual benefit. It's the invisible glue that holds groups together, fuels collaboration, and creates the environment for meaningful, sustained efforts toward a common purpose.

Unlike financial or physical capital, social capital is intangible. You can't hold it, own it, or store it in a vault. But you can build it—and more importantly, *use* it.



Relationships and the comradery of Trail Maintenance.

Continued next page



### A Capital That Produces Public Good

Social capital produces *public goods*. When people come together—members exhibiting at a festival, volunteers maintaining a remote trail section, or board members planning long-term conservation strategy—they're spending social capital. They're combining tools and know-how with shared values and trust to create something that benefits everyone.

Whether it's cleaner trail heads, safer trails, or more visible blazes, social capital multiplies the impact of physical and human capital by directing them toward collective goals.



Festivals and crosscut forge social connections.

### The Capital That Grows When Spent

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of social capital is this: **when it's spent, it doesn't diminish—it grows.** Unlike money or tools, social capital isn't depleted through use.

When BMTA members work together, help each other, or show up with shared purpose, trust deepens. Relationships strengthen. More people want to be involved. And the next effort—be it organizing, building, or problem-solving—becomes easier and more effective.



### Social Capital on the Benton MacKaye Trail

Nowhere is the value of social capital more evident than in the work of the **Benton MacKaye Trail Association**.

The trail itself stretches across rugged terrain, but the real backbone of the BMTA is its people—the volunteers, members, maintainers, and partners who come together with a shared passion for wilderness, recreation, and stewardship.

Every Saturday maintenance trip, every board meeting, every newsletter article, and every conversation on the trail reflects the investment of social capital. Volunteers bring their tools. They bring their skills. But more importantly, they bring their *commitment to each other and to the trail*. That's what keeps 288 miles of backcountry trails accessible, beautiful, and safe.



Sharing their passion.

And just like social capital should, each act of service on the BMT grows the community. New members become old friends. Trail volunteers return year after year. Partnerships with the Forest Service and like-minded organizations deepen. Social capital is spent constantly—and in return, the BMTA becomes stronger, more resilient, and more capable of leaving a lasting legacy.

### A Living Example

The Benton MacKaye Trail is more than a footpath. It is a living example of what happens when tools, skills, and relationships are aligned around a common purpose. It is what happens when social capital is cultivated and spent generously.

So, whether you're wielding a Pulaski on a steep hillside, sharing your knowledge at an annual meeting, or welcoming someone new to the association, you're investing in the BMTA's most renewable resource: *social capital*.

And the return on that investment? A trail for generations to follow.



## 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.*



## Lost and Found at Lost Creek

Photos courtesy of Ray Laws





# Upcoming

by Kelly Motter, Hiking Director

## July

**July 7 (Monday)** Boyd's Gap to Old Copper Road to Thunder Rock Camp. Easy/moderate six miles. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at [rcollinson@bmta.org](mailto:rcollinson@bmta.org).

**July 10 (Thursday)** BMT Watson Gap to Shadow Falls off So Fork Trail. Moderate 8 miles round trip. Contact Hike Leader Steve Dennison at [sdennison@bmta.org](mailto:sdennison@bmta.org).



**July 11 (Friday)** BMT: Lost Creek Section. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Easy 6 miles. Beautiful walk along Lost Creek. One stream crossing will probably get your feet a little wet so come prepared. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [kcissna@bmta.org](mailto:kcissna@bmta.org).

**July 11 (Friday)** BMT: Hwy 60 to Skeenah Gap. Moderately strenuous 7.2 miles. Contact Hike Leader Steve Dennison at [sdennison@bmta.org](mailto:sdennison@bmta.org).



**July 12 (Saturday)** BMTA GA Maintenance Trip. Section 8: Bushy Head Gap to Dyer Gap. Contact the Georgia Maintenance Director at [bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org](mailto:bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org).

**July 16 (Wednesday)** Cartecay River Loop Trails. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Moderate 5-6 miles, much of it along the beautiful Cartecay River. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [kcissna@bmta.org](mailto:kcissna@bmta.org).

**July 18 (Friday)** BMT Series with GATC. Fall Branch Falls to Weaver Creek Road. This moderately strenuous hike is about six miles long and goes over Rocky Mountain and Scroggin Knob. Shuttle required. Meet at Food Lion in Blue Ridge. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [kcissna@bmta.org](mailto:kcissna@bmta.org).



**July 22 (Tuesday)** BMTA Members-Can you pilot a Pontoon Boat? If so, you can help the BMTA and have some fun doing it.

The BMTA cleans campsites along the Lakeshore Trail on the north shore of Fontana Lake and uses a pontoon boat from Fontana Village to support this. Normally a whole day event, but only once or twice a year. We need a couple of folks who are comfortable with a pontoon boat with 6-8 folks on board, landing on the shore and getting everyone back safely.

If you are interested, Contact Steve Pruett at [spruett@bmta.org](mailto:spruett@bmta.org).





**July 26** (Saturday) BMTA TN/NC Maintenance Trip. Section 16c (Brookshire Creek section, 3.5 miles).  
Contact BMTA TN/NC Crew Trip Leader Rick Harris at [rharris@bmta.org](mailto:rharris@bmta.org)

## August

**August 1** (Friday) Bear Creek Trail. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Moderate seven miles.  
Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [kcissna@bmta.org](mailto:kcissna@bmta.org).



**August 9** (Saturday) BMTA GA Maintenance Trip. TBA  
Contact the Georgia Maintenance Director at [bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org](mailto:bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org).

**August 10** (Sunday) BMT Series: Weaver Creek to Boardtown Road.

This series is part of the BMTA/GATC series. The hike starts at Weaver Creek. In 2.5 miles, the trail crosses US 76/515 and enters Cherry Log Mountain subdivision. We will cross the lowest point on the BMT in Georgia (1540'), pass the Indian Rock Shelter (at 4.2 miles), climb Patterson Mountain (2300') and finish at Boardtown Road. Moderate 6.4 miles. Shuttle required.

Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [kcissna@bmta.org](mailto:kcissna@bmta.org).



Indian Rock Shelter

**August 15** (Friday) Emery Creek. Moderate five miles. The trail for this in-and-out hike is fairly easy, but 26 stream crossings (a number up to your ankles and two around your knees) and a section of potentially slippery rocks toward the beginning and again at the end make it more difficult than it otherwise would be. Holly and Emery Creeks, two lovely waterfalls and a beautiful trail make it worth the trouble.  
Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [kcissna@bmta.org](mailto:kcissna@bmta.org).



**August 23** (Saturday) BMTA TN/NC Maintenance Trip. TBA  
Contact:  
BMTA TN-NC Maintenance Director at [bmtatn-ncmaintdirector@bmta.org](mailto:bmtatn-ncmaintdirector@bmta.org)



## September

**September 7** (Sunday) BMT Series. Joint hike with BMT and GATC! This hike is from Bushy Head to Dyer Gap. The hike is 12.4 miles long and is very strenuous.  
Contact Hike Leader Kelly Motter at [kmotter@bmta.org](mailto:kmotter@bmta.org).



**September 13** (Saturday) BMTA GA Maintenance Trip. TBA  
Contact the Georgia Maintenance Director at [bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org](mailto:bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org).

**September 22** (Monday) Gahuti Lite. Five Intersecting Trails Loop at Fort Mountain State Park. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog).  
About 5 moderate miles. Highlights include cascading creeks, a long-distance view and a lakeside walk. Ends with a moderate uphill walk. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [kcissna@bmta.org](mailto:kcissna@bmta.org).

**September 26** (Friday) BMT: From Highway 60 to the Swinging Bridge and back. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog).  
Moderate 7.4 miles. Lunch by the Toccoa River and the BMT's iconic Suspension Bridge.  
Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [kcissna@bmta.org](mailto:kcissna@bmta.org).



**September 27** (Saturday) BMTA TN/NC Maintenance Trip. TBA  
Contact:  
BMTA TN-NC Maintenance Director at [bmtatn-ncmaintdirector@bmta.org](mailto:bmtatn-ncmaintdirector@bmta.org)

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



The deadline for the August Newsletter is Wednesday, July 30.  
Thank you!

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# Welcome BMTA 2025 Partners!

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

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