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## Points of Interest

Click the title to go directly to the page.

### Progress

Tom Mitchell

The Work We Do

Len Foote Hike Inn

US Mountain Ranger Donation

GA Maintenance

Safety and Bleed Packs

Wilds of Tennessee

New Resource

Books to Hike By

New Year's Day Hike

Kiosk Completed

Trail Bites

Icy Trails

"Ye Olde Mountain Goat"

In Search of "Oh, Wow"

Upcoming

BMTA Partners

## BMTA Officers 2025-2026

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



**BMTA Headquarters**



# Benton MacKaye Trail Association

VOLUME 43, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2026

## 2025: A Year of Progress and Partnership

by Bob Cowdrick

As we reflect on 2025, it's clear that the Benton MacKaye Trail Association made a meaningful impact. Thanks to the dedication of our volunteers, all **288 miles of the Benton MacKaye Trail** were maintained in a safe and productive manner throughout the year. Earlier this month, I met with our U.S. Forest Service land partners, and their feedback reinforced the impact of our collective efforts:

*"Without your help on our district, Robert would never be able to accomplish what he has done on our trails."*

— Andrew Carrier, District Ranger, Tellico Ranger District

*"I recognize the huge impact your folks have had on the BMT and our local communities this year."*

— William Hunter, District Ranger, Conasauga Ranger District

Hearing this directly from our land partners confirms what many of us already know—the work of BMTA volunteers truly matters. I am pleased to share with you the same impact report that was provided to our partners.



## 2025 Impact Report

**288 Miles of Trail Maintained**

In GA, TN and NC



### Major Projects

Sisson Chapel Boardwalk  
 Unicoi Kiosk  
 Clean Trails Day  
 21 New/Replacement Signs (\$1850)



**8 Festivals**

**3 Trail Towns**

**2 Grants – NFF and AllTrails**



### Financials 2025

Revenue: \$56,000  
 Expenses: \$36,000



**846 Members**

**164 Maintainers**

48% Male and 52% Female



**11,836 Trail Maint Volunteer Hours**

41 Hrs per mile

\$376,422 USFS Impact



### Members Trained

4 Crosscut Certifications  
 0 Chainsaw Certifications  
 4 First Aid and CPR, 1 WFA



### Partnerships

3 Gold Partners

Continued next page



# 2026 Initiatives

## Trail Maintenance

288 Miles



## GSMNP

Campsite Cleanups



## Projects

Bushy Head Gap Steps  
 Accessible Trails  
 Land Acquisition Funding  
 Little Skeenah Creek Bridge



## Training

FA/CPR/Chainsaw & Crosscut



## Signage

Replacement Signs



## Outreach

Outreach Coordinator  
 Scouts, Schools, Organizations



## National Scenic Trail

Feasibility Study



### Looking Ahead to 2026

As we move into 2026, our goals remain simple and focused:

- **Maintain the trail**
- **Do it safely**
- **Have fun doing it**

To support these goals, the BMTA Board has finalized a **five-year Strategic Plan (2026–2030)** after two years of thoughtful discussion and planning. This plan will serve as our roadmap for the future, with progress reviewed quarterly and shared with members annually.

I encourage all members to take time to review the Strategic Plan [HERE](#).

### Thank You!

In summary, 2025 was a year of meaningful progress for the BMTA, and I am confident that 2026 will be even more successful.

Thank you for your dedication, hard work, and continued support. None of this happens without you.

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



## Tom Mitchell – Master of the BMTA Toolshed and Friend – RIP

by Tom Keene



The news that Tom Mitchell had passed away caught me off guard. It's sad to lose such a likable, decent human being. But fairly soon, I began to smile remembering all that Tom contributed to the BMTA, as a section maintainer, as Master of the BMTA Toolshed, but above all, as a person.

Tom took over the job of maintaining the tools about the time Joe Sisson moved the log cabin we came to call our "World Headquarters" to its current spot beside the Sisson's sales offices. Formerly our tools had been piled into the corners of a backyard-barn type shed next to the old Sisson Pavilion. If you were hauling tools for a work trip it was often a struggle to find enough tools sharp and ready to use.

All that changed after Tom and Ralph Heller outfitted one side of the "new" log-cabin as our toolshed. They put in hangers and boxes specifically designed for the different tools and then capped it off by adding a workbench with a vise and a grinding wheel. The final touch came after a few months when Tom added a big box specifically for all tools used in the most recent work trip. That box meant he didn't have to sort through all the tools every month to see which had been used and needed attention.

My older brother is a retired supply officer in the US Navy. Once when he visited from Pennsylvania, I took him on a quick tour of the World Headquarters. As we left the toolroom, I could sense he was harkening back to his service days. "That toolshed," he intoned, "is IN GOOD ORDER." And so it was, as long as Tom Mitchell was presiding. What a pleasure it was to use tools that were invariably clean and sharp – and frequently also sprayed with a little oil to prevent rusting. It really seemed it was quite luxurious!

The last years I had regular contact with Tom took on an added poignancy after his much-loved wife Jan was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. We saw less and less of Tom as he increasingly felt he could not leave Jan on her own. When we did see him, we could see it hurt him deeply to watch her deterioration. But Tom refused to be downcast, sometimes joking wearily about their current trials, but mostly just determined to keep his spirits up, and ours.

Looking back, I realize those last years underlined for us all what a likable, hardworking and brave human being Tom was. It wasn't just our tools and the BMTA toolshed that Tom Mitchell kept "in good order"; it was his family, himself, and – in no small measure – those of us who had the honor of knowing him as a friend.

Tom's memorial service will be held at Cherry Log Christian Church, 1149 Cherry Log Street, Cherry Log GA on Sunday, January 18, at 2:30 PM, with a reception to follow. Tom was featured in the December 2022 Newsletter. To view go [HERE](#).



# The Work We Do

## We Can't Do It Without YOUR Help

### Memberships and Donations Fuel Our Program to Protect, Preserve and Maintain the BMT

#### MAINTENANCE *(A Few Examples of last month's work completed)*

- ◆ 140+ blowdowns removed
- ◆ 115+ water diversions cleaned
- ◆ Trail de-bermed in over 100 locations
- ◆ 20,200'+ Brushed.
- ◆ Steps repaired

#### PROJECTS ON TAP

- ◆ BMT ADA Trail Segment
- ◆ Kiosks at BMT Trailheads
- ◆ Little Skeenah Creek Bridge
- ◆ Loss Creek Bridge
- ◆ Signage
- ◆ Tools
- ◆ 65 Sawyer & First Aid Certs need to be renewed by 3/1/26

#### LAND ACQUISITION FUND (LAF)

These monetary reserves make it possible for BMTA to be ready to act when a piece of property valuable to the trail corridor comes on the market.

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**YOUR generosity makes maintaining the BMT possible!**

**THANK YOU!**

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**It only takes a few minutes, do it today!**

[Join](#)

[Renew](#)

[Donate](#)

[Donate LAF](#)

## BMTA to the Len Foote Hike Inn for Half-Price

by Clare Sullivan

The beautiful Len Foote Hike Inn has reserved rooms for BMTA members on Monday, February 23, 2026. All rooms will be half-price. Members can call 706-344-1547, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM-2:30 PM, to make a reservation. You cannot reserve online. Let them know you want a room transferred from Clare Sullivan's name to your name. **The deadline for reserving is Monday, February 16.**

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

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

Rick and Brenda Harris will be giving a presentation on "Paddling the Boundary Waters" about a canoe paddling trip in the Boundary Waters of Minnesota.

Feel free to visit the Len Foote Hike Inn website at [The Hike Inn](#). If you'd like to hike to the Hike Inn with others, meet at the Amicalola Visitors Center at 10:00 a.m.



## Save the Dates

2026 Annual Meeting & Hike Fest  
November 5-8, 2026

Copperhill Brewery in Ducktown, TN

*Watch for Details in the April Newsletter*

## US Mountain Ranger Association Presented with Donation

by Mike Pilvinsky

The US Mountain Ranger Association (USMRA) is made up of active-duty and Veteran US Army Rangers. This association supports active-duty Rangers and their families when in need, as well as other activities for the Rangers. In addition, the USMRA provides scholarships for the children of Rangers.

At the BMTA Annual Meeting at Bryson City in November, veterans in attendance voted to support one of six nominated military related organizations. The USMRA was selected to receive a \$700.00 donation which was given by anonymous sources. At the next scheduled meeting of the USMRA, Mike Pilvinsky presented checks for \$700.00 to Bob Williams, their grateful President. Mike and former BTMA President, Dick Evans are both former Rangers and members of this organization. Dick Evans has worked with this organization in the past in support of "Blind Rangers" hiking the Appalachian Trail.



**Bob Williams, President of the US Mountain Ranger Association and BMTAer Mike Pilvinsky.**

## Georgia Maintenance Trip

by Joe Cantwell

The Georgia monthly work trip on December 13 concentrated on Sections 2a,b and c from Three Forks to the Suspension Bridge. The objective was to clean and improve water diversions, remove scattered deadfall and blowdowns and to lop encroaching growth.

Crew One, including Barry Allen, Patrick Ward and Shane Morrison, removed one blowdown blocking the trail just north of the Three Forks entrance. Then they drove to the Bald and tackled 45 water diversions both south and north of the Bald. Mike Pilvinski and Carol Nufer started at the Bald and lopped back to Three Forks.

Crew Two drove on FS 766 to a short bushwack walk into Bryson Gap. From here, Steve Dennison, Bill Cox and Dale Fiedler headed southbound for two miles dressing up water diversions and debarred the trail in 95 locations. Joe Cantwell and Brian Trinkle worked northbound for 1.8 miles refurbishing 19 water diversions and cutting four blowdowns. Darcy Douglas provided lopper support to remove encroaching brush.

Crew Three started at the Suspension Bridge parking lot and worked southbound toward Bryson Gap. Steve Pruett along with Daphne and Kenny Martin, Will Stanley and Jesse Lumsden, the Blue Ridge District Wilderness/ Trail Coordinator. Jesse provided the crew with copies of the new Trails Maintenance Handbook published by the FS. Twelve water diversions were cleaned. Steve replaced four nuts on the suspension bridge and formulated plans to replace three steps and three water diverters in the near future.



## Safety Committee Report

by Steve Pruett with photos courtesy of Cindy Ward

As chair of the safety committee for 2025, I have surveyed for a second time the active, accredited sawyers. Of the 26 sawyers who responded, many did not have the recommended first aid kit called Bleed Pack. Response to the survey was excellent. Of 26 sawyers, at least 14 were without the kits on Oct 11, 2025. Two batches of the kits have been ordered and are now being distributed. Donations are covering the expense.

I have worked with Joe Cantwell, the Georgia maintenance Director, who chose a bright orange/red Bleed Pack which is worn with the sawyers' protective chaps. The Bleed Pack is used for emergency management of a severe bleeding injury and contains coagulation material, pressure dressings and even a tourniquet for extreme cases.

Training for use of the Bleed Pack includes wearing the pack on the belt of the sawyers chaps at all times for ready use, two expert videos on the use of the bleed packs and planned hands-on demonstrations for sawyers once the packs are distributed.



Patrick Ward demonstrates how the Bleed Pack is worn. It is within easy access to sawyers.

# In the Wilds of Tennessee

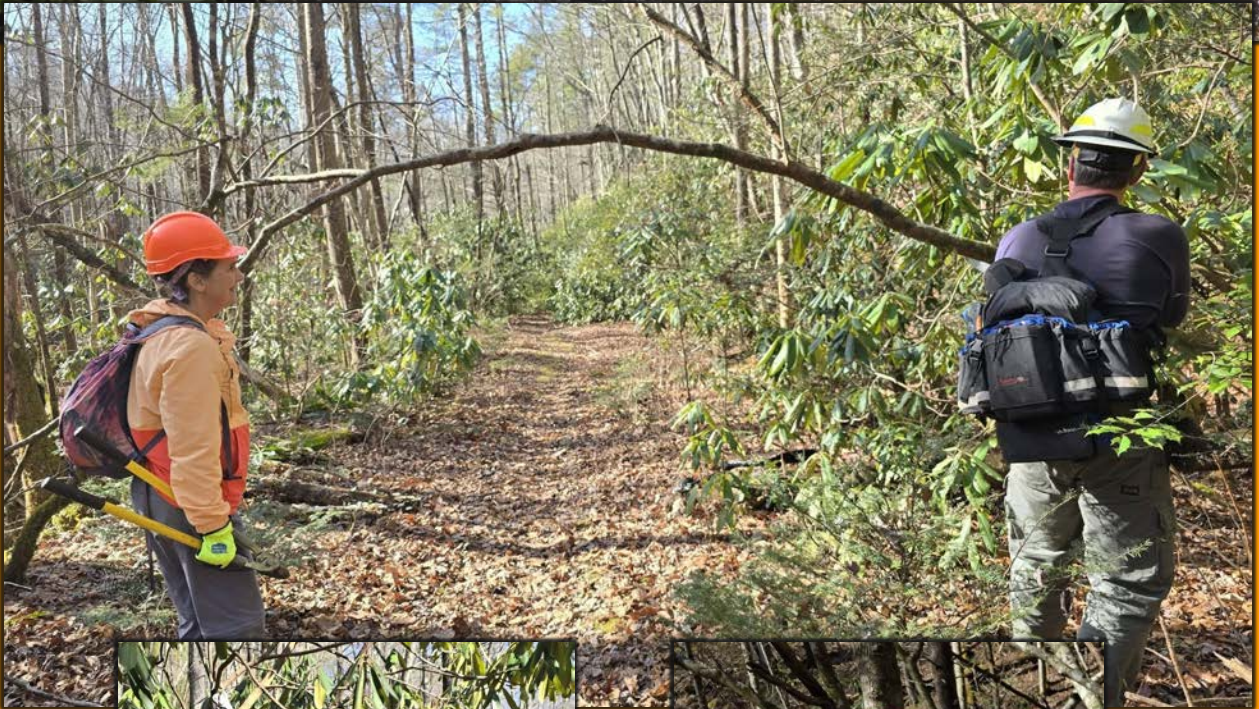
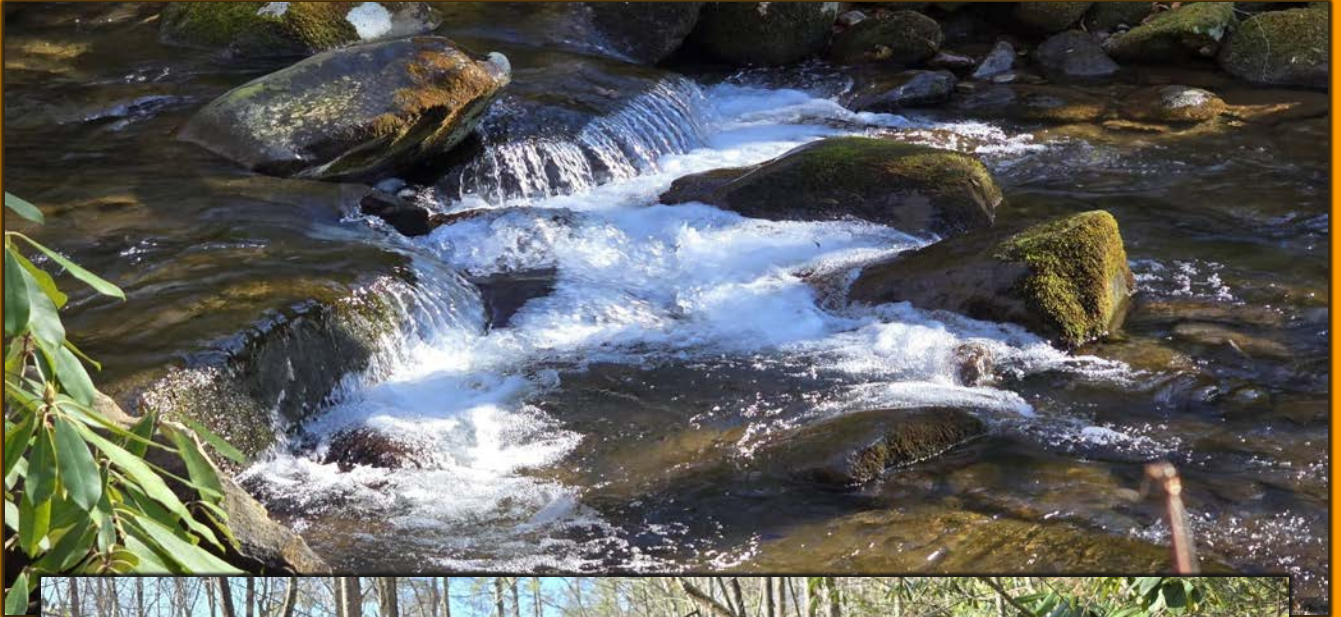
Photos by Brenda Harris



Who are these people? Just the best ever!!



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# New Resource for Monthly Trail Workers and Maintainers

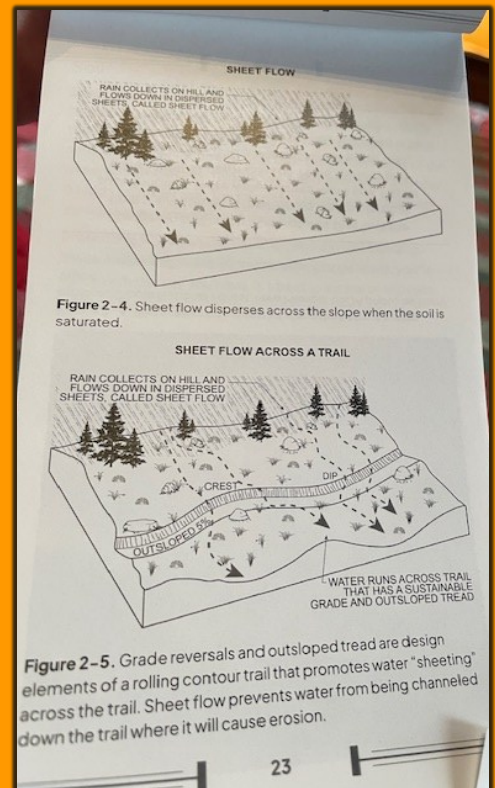
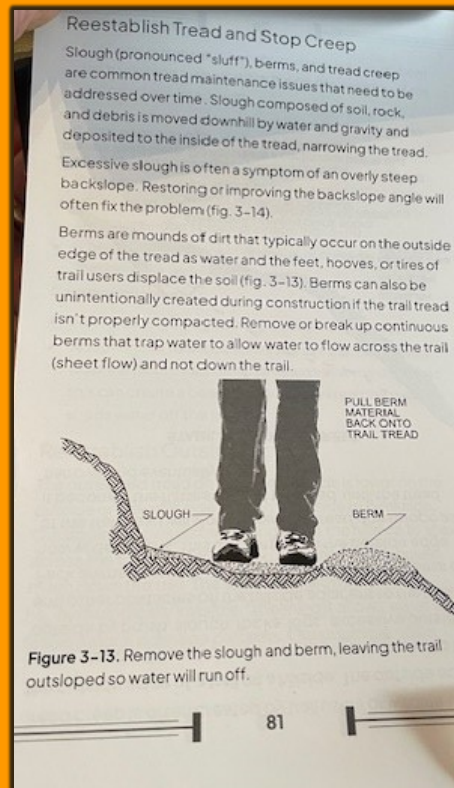
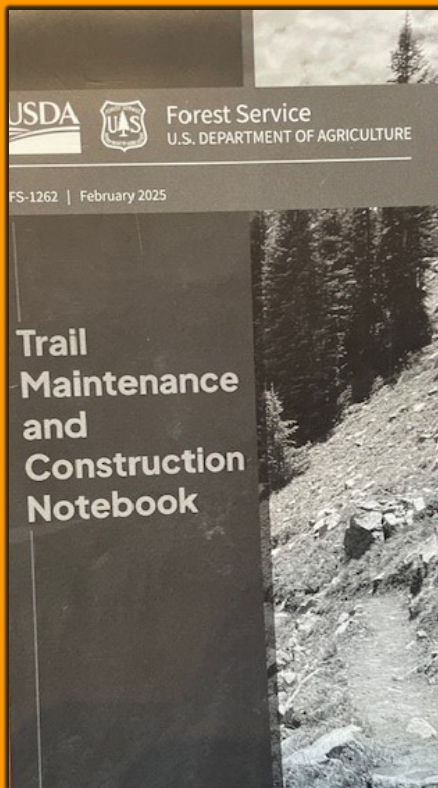
by Steve Pruett

Our NFS representative has begun distributing the new (revised Feb 2025) Trail Maintenance and Construction Notebook--a pocked-sized reference perfectly suited to our needs as BMTA members. Jesse Lumsden, our NFS rep, distributed a few of these to our trail work group, while taking us through the use of drainage techniques for water diversions. The booklet emphasizes new thinking about natural beauty and sustainability, while adding new guidance based on experience. More of the 'walk and talk' sessions with Jesse would be a valuable experience for our BMTA members.

Newly revised guidelines for best practices are here-- with explanations and diagrams for handy reference in the field. This will be a special resource to chew over and apply the lessons from other experienced trail builders. Obviously, the "lessons learned" can be adjusted to the variety of situations that we face as maintainers on the BMT. Members who are not active maintainers may enjoy the developing story of foot trails for everyone.



Also, in the National Geographic this month--January, 2026--there is a main article: *How to Build a Perfect Hike*. As expected, this is an impressive presentation of the evolving ways to build beautiful sustainable trails.



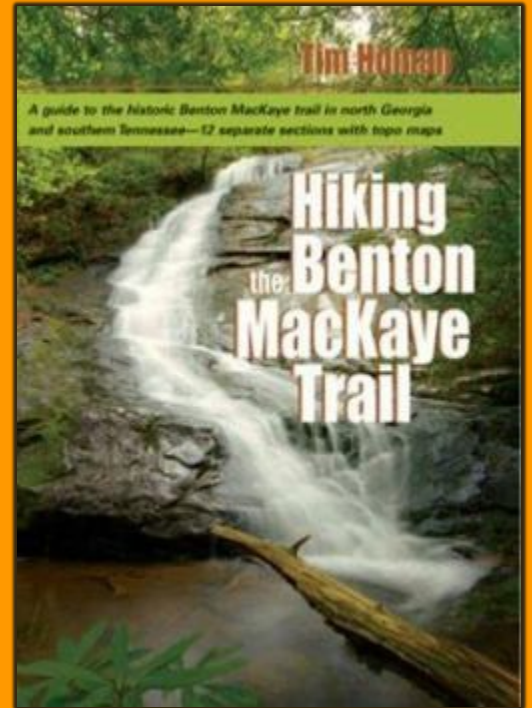
## Books to Hike By

by George Owen

*NOTE: Newsletter Editor Kathy Williams suggested the other day to me that I consider writing a rather regular column for our monthly newsletter as an old BMTA co-founder, former early president, etc. She also suggested I do some book reviews of publications I love and recommend. So here below goes the very first one:*

It was the very first book on the Benton MacKaye Trail ever published - by Tim Homan and brought out by Peachtree Publishers in Atlanta. Entitled simply *Hiking the Benton MacKaye Trail*, it was listed on the cover as "A guide to the Benton MacKaye Trail from Georgia's Springer Mountain to Tennessee's Ocoee River". For the initial years of the BMT, it was the primary guide before the trail was completed all the rest of the way from the Ocoee River in Tennessee to the northeastern corner of the Smokies at Big Creek Campground.

The book served an original purpose proposed initially by Georgia's Chattahoochee National Forest Supervisor Pat Thomas as a kind of nature guide across part of that forest. Thus, the book has a heavy emphasis on the flora and fauna of the Chattahoochee National Forest in addition to chapter-by-chapter descriptions of our beloved footpath's mile-by-mile and section-by-section hiking route. Section maps, simple elevation charts, photographs and drawings fill the publication. The book is just a little over 250 pages long.



After acknowledgements and two contents pages in the front part, comes the preface. This preface on its second page tells a story by Tim Homan about his "unforgettable moment of fear" on the trail which always leaves me with quite a chuckle. After basic "Questions and Answers" about the BMTA and BMT, comes more preliminary items on the history and other information. Finally, the remainder and bulk of the book describes the trail from Springer Mountain, Georgia to the Ocoee River in Tennessee, where its further expansion northward in Tennessee was stalled for some years.

So, for both newcomers and longer-time members to the BMTA, I highly recommend this keepsake book. Granted, there are some more recent relocations that change some information slightly, but for the most part this book is still very relevant today. Yes, there are more recent trail guidebooks now covering the entire BMT from Springer Mountain to the Smokies, but this early Benton MacKaye Trail book is a real first and historical marker for you to have. It can still be found for sale in some outdoor bookstores scattered across the three states covered by the BMT. So, acquire a copy and enjoy your own - I'm not about to let my two copies leave my home!



# New Years Day on the Trail

by Kathy Williams

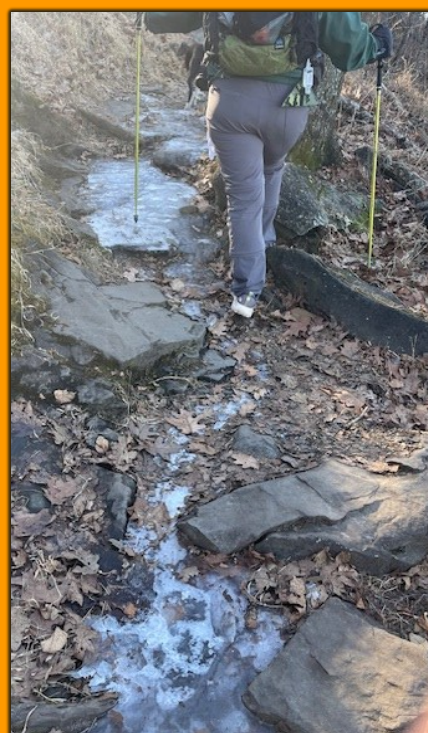
It was a cold start, but bright and beautiful, as Ken Cissna led Mike Pilvinsky, Kelly Motter, Gilbert Treadwell and Kathy Williams on the BMT/AT Loop Trail on Springer Mountain. On the way up there were icy patches to challenge the hikers to make sure they tread carefully. It was also a time when AT thru hikers are out and about, and we met the hiker who had scored the number one tag. The number two tag was also on the mountain. Intrepid Artie kept us all on track and we had a snack on the always stunning Owen Vista.



There were campers at the trailhead. Was the white smoke Pope related?



We need to get moving, Kathy! It's cold! Gilbert had taken off.



Icy, beautiful and treacherous.

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AT thru Hiker, Tie-die Girl.



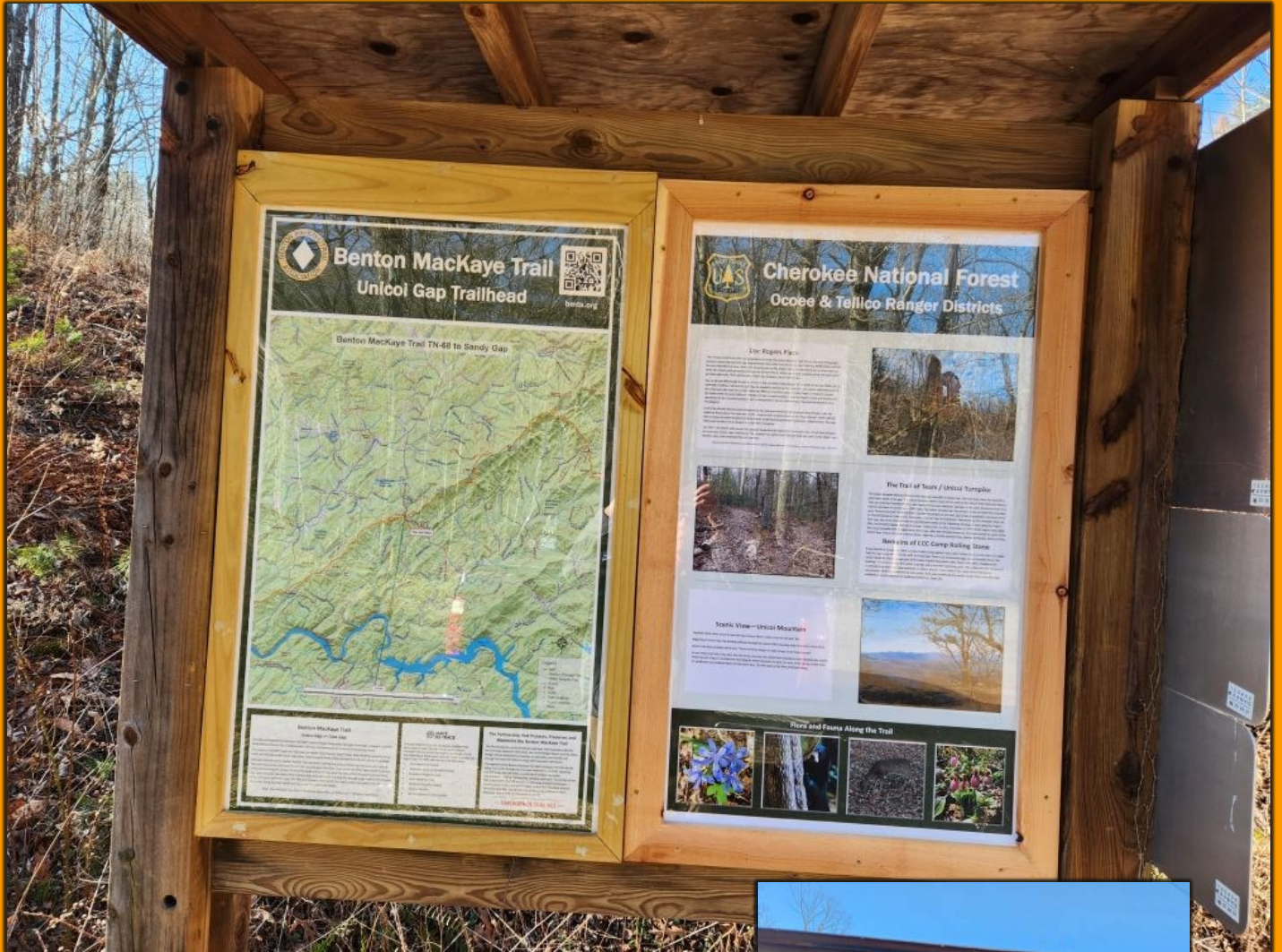
AT thru Hiker, New York. He got number one tag.



Owen Vista

# Kiosk at Unicoi Gap is Completed!

Photos by Ian Guttridge



A big thank you to Ian Guttridge who recently completed the installation of this kiosk poster. For years there was only one poster on the left side of the kiosk with the right side empty. This project has been worked on for several years and now has both sides full of educational material giving hikers a better appreciation of what the trail in this area is all about.

BMTA Communications Director Joy Forehand designed an excellent poster insert with stunning photographs and concise information to explain each one.

A big well done to both of you!



## Trail Bites



Hikers on the BMT in the Cohuttas between Spanish Oaks and Jacks River Trail. Photo courtesy of Mike Pilvinsky



Tree seems proud to display the BMT blaze.



### 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.*

## Icy Trails Are Coming



Tiny Sasquatch is helping Mr Bones get out his trail crampons to help with traction on icy trails. Mr Bones always gets his left crampon mixed up with his right crampon, but Tiny Sasquatch does not.



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

*'Benton MacKaye Trail vs. Appalachian Trail'*

## "Ye Olde Mountain Goat" Makes Offers, Request

by George Owen

George Owen, BMTA co-founder and former president, now somewhat incapacitated by age and a trail accident, wishes to herein make some offers and a request to our hiking club membership.

He offers the following:

- ◆ To lead vehicular trips around the mountains to vistas and other sites while joining in meals with small groups or individuals (he's already doing this with board members Liz Henderson and Kathy Williams).
- ◆ Meet at his mountain home or elsewhere to help you plan outdoor trips to the Southern Appalachians, Northern Florida, certain western national parks and Switzerland.
- ◆ Share together experiences you might offer.
- ◆ Do a free hike shuttle for you or small group.
- ◆ Talk about classes he has offered (including on hiking, happiness studies and philosophy).
- ◆ Or just get together for good conversation, play games, etc.

Contact George by phone at his cell number or by email to discuss/propose these and other things.

Cell phone (706) 897-3366

Email [gowen2@tds.net](mailto:gowen2@tds.net)

He so much enjoys being with and still sharing experiences with us BMTAers. He can still do very short walks at a quite slow pace with you too.



The "Old Pro" enjoying the Fire.

A request: George is also upgrading his mountain treetop home just off U.S. 76 between Blairsville and Blue Ridge, GA and would like input from you folks on local resources you might know about in doing this. Contact him by phone or email and he can tell you what some of these needs are. He wishes to make his two-story mountain cabin home more available for BMTA small groups or individuals for visits and even overnight free stays.

## In Search of “Oh, WOW” with George Owen

by Kathy Williams



While George Owen, a founding father of the BMTA, deals with some health issues he has embarked upon a unique kind of outdoor rehab. He likes to find a vista or scenic drive, take people on a tour of them and find some tasty nourishment along the way. It is a novel way to still enjoy his passion for the outdoors as well as his love of sharing tales about the BMT. It is the search for “Oh, WOW!”

Recently I ventured out and about with him. Our first tour took us on the scenic drive to the Toccoa Riverside Restaurant. Once there George regaled our server with a brief history of the BMT and its route beside the restaurant.

He talked about the many issues with trail overuse at Fall Branch Falls. We looked back upon the work that had gone into the maintenance and the kiosk we installed.

He topped it all off with hot chocolate and whipped cream as well as blueberry cobbler!

The next adventure included Joy and Frank Forehand. The four of us started with pizza and then took off to the wilds of Tennessee. We drove along the Ocoee River and then headed up and up to the Chihowee Recreation Area in the Cherokee National Forest. George had a map and Marcie Spencer’s newest book, *Cherokee National Forest*. The drive was spectacular and we were able to visit places in Spencer’s book.



We stopped to gaze upon the view from Boyd's Gap.



As we climbed ever higher, we were able to view Parkview Lake and the marina with Sugarloaf Mountain and its pointy top in the distance.



A CCC constructed gazebo like the one on Spencer's book cover.



We went to the campground which is now closed for the season and George showed us how to access the trail to go to Benton Falls. It is now on my to-do list.

I can hardly wait for the next search for "Oh, WOW!" with George.

# Upcoming

by Ray Laws, Hiking Director

## January

**January 6** (Tuesday) BMT at Sisson Property at Cherry Log, GA. Four miles. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at [rcollinson@bmta.org](mailto:rcollinson@bmta.org).

**January 9** (Friday) BMT: Three Forks to No Name Bald and back.

DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Moderate 4.7 miles.

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



Long Creek Falls on the way to No Name Bald.



**January 10** (Saturday) BMTA GA Maintenance Trip. Sections 1a-b-c (Springer Mt >> Three Forks. Watch for Emails with Details Coming Soon!

Contact the Georgia Maintenance Director at [bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org](mailto:bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org).

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

**January 16** (Friday) Hooper Bald / Huckleberry Knob. Meet at the Cherohala Skyway Visitor Center, 10 AM. Bring cold weather gear, lunch, water. THIS HIKE IS OPEN TO DOGS AND TO MEMBERS OF BOTH THE BMTA AND CHC. Your dog must be leashed. We are hoping for snow to make this a memorable hike. The round trip to Hooper Bald (5440' high) is 2 miles and the round trip to Huckleberry Knob (5540' high) is 1.8 miles. Afterwards, when we return to Tellico Plains, we can gather for supper and beverages at one of the local restaurants, perhaps the Peach Street Grill and the Tellico Brewing Company for some great cuisine and a local brew. If the weather is the wrong type of nasty (cold rain instead of snow), our rain date will be Friday, January 23. Contact Hike Leaders Rick and Brenda Harris (and Nahme, our dog) at [rharris@bmta.org](mailto:rharris@bmta.org).

**January 19** (Monday) Thunder Rock Express to BMT back to Thunder Rock Campground in the Ocoee area of Tennessee. Moderate 5 miles with some steep downhill.

Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at [rcollinson@bmta.org](mailto:rcollinson@bmta.org).



**January 24** (Saturday) BMTA TN/NC Maintenance Trip. Sections 14a and 14b (FS 22B >> Buck Bald Road). Watch for Emails with Details Coming Soon!

Contact:

BMTA TN-NC Maintenance Director at [bmtatn-ncmaintdirector@bmta.org](mailto:bmtatn-ncmaintdirector@bmta.org)

**January 26** (Monday) Wilscot Gap to Old Dial Road and return. Strenuous 11.5 miles.  
Contact Hike Leader Steve Dennison at [sdennison@bmta.org](mailto:sdennison@bmta.org).

**January 28** (Wednesday) Coker Creek Falls to the BMT. Coker Creek Falls is a series of cascading waterfalls from 5 to 45 feet, located in Polk County, Tennessee. We'll hike by the Falls 3 miles down the trail to the BMT big bridge and back. Moderate 6 miles.  
Contact Hike Leaders Ed and Clare Sullivan at [csullivan@bmta.org](mailto:csullivan@bmta.org).

## February

**February 2** (Monday) Trails of Jack Rabbit in Hayesville, North Carolina. Moderate 5-mile hike by Lake Chatuge. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at [rcollinson@bmta.org](mailto:rcollinson@bmta.org).

**February 9** (Monday) BMT: Bushy Head Gap thru Hudson Gap to McKinney Gap and return. Moderately/strenuous 8.2 miles. 1.5 miles Hudson Gap to McKinney Gap.  
Contact Hike Leader Steve Dennison at [sdennison@bmta.org](mailto:sdennison@bmta.org).



**February 14** (Saturday) BMTA GA Maintenance Trip. TBA  
Contact the Georgia Maintenance Director at [bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org](mailto:bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org).

**February 16** (Monday) Unicoi to Helen and back. Start at the Unicoi State Park Lodge and hike into Helen and return. Moderate 6-mile hike with optional lunch in Helen after hike.  
Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at [rcollinson@bmta.org](mailto:rcollinson@bmta.org).

**February 20** (Friday) Bald River Falls in the winter. Meet at the Cherohala Skyway Visitor Center at 10 AM. Bring cold weather gear, lunch, water. THIS HIKE IS OPEN TO DOGS AND TO MEMBERS OF BOTH THE BMTA AND CHC. Your dog must be leashed. We are hoping for a frozen waterfall or lots of water crashing over the several falls. This 4.5-mile loop hike will start at the Baby Falls Picnic Area. We will go up the road to the Cow Camp Trailhead, then up the ridge on this trail then downhill to the Bald River Trail. We will then turn left (upstream) and go to the Pawpaw Branch Crossing. From there, we will return downstream along the Bald River Trail to River Road past several incredible waterfalls, ending, of course, at the iconic Bald River Falls by the road. We will then walk along the road upstream to Baby Falls and our vehicles. Afterwards, we can dine at a local Tellico Plains restaurant, maybe Mexican food at one of the two Mexican restaurants, enjoying margheritas and authentic Mexican food. If the weather is terrible on February 20, we will re-schedule the hike to February 27.

Contact Hike Leaders Rick and Brenda Harris (and Nahme, our dog) at [rharris@bmta.org](mailto:rharris@bmta.org)



**February 21** (Saturday) BMTA TN/NC Maintenance Trip. TBA  
Contact:  
BMTA TN-NC Maintenance Director at [bmtatn-ncmaintdirector@bmta.org](mailto:bmtatn-ncmaintdirector@bmta.org)

**February 23** (Monday) BMTA at the Hike Inn. The scenic moderate 5-mile hike gradually goes uphill. We will spend the night at the Len Foote Hike Inn and return the next day. If you'd like to hike to the Hike Inn with others, meet at the Amicalola Visitors Center at 10:00 AM. See [page 5](#) for complete details.

## March

**March 2** (Monday) BMT to AT to Springer Mountain and return down the AT and back to the BMT parking lot in Fannin County, GA. Moderate five miles. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at [rcollinson@bmta.org](mailto:rcollinson@bmta.org).

**March 6** (Friday) Two Loops of BMT/AT from Three Forks Southbound. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Easy/moderate 5 miles. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [kcissna@bmta.org](mailto:kcissna@bmta.org).



**March 14** (Saturday) BMTA GA Maintenance Trip. TBA  
Contact the Georgia Maintenance Director at [bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org](mailto:bmtagamaintdirector@bmta.org).

**March 16** (Monday) Brush Creek Loop in Ducktown, Tennessee. Moderate 4.5 miles along Ocoee Lake # 1. Contact Hike Leader Ralph Collinson at [rcollinson@bmta.org](mailto:rcollinson@bmta.org).



**March 21** (Saturday) BMTA TN/NC Maintenance Trip. TBA  
Contact:  
BMTA TN-NC Maintenance Director at [bmtatn-ncmaintdirector@bmta.org](mailto:bmtatn-ncmaintdirector@bmta.org)

**March 23** (Monday) Talking Rock. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Easy/moderate 5 miles. Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [kcissna@bmta.org](mailto:kcissna@bmta.org).

**March 27** (Friday) BMT/AT: Upper two loops on Springer Mountain from Big Stamp Gap. DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). About 5 moderate miles. See all the sights: Springer Mountain, an AT shelter, the beginning of the BMT, the plaque honoring Benton MacKaye and the Owen Overlook! Contact Hike Leader Ken Cissna at [kcissna@bmta.org](mailto:kcissna@bmta.org).

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

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

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# Welcome BMTA 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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