

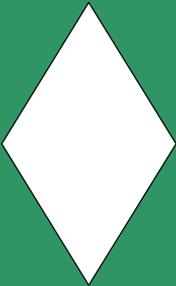
Benton MacKaye Trail



Thru-Hikers' Guidebook

Approved by

By: Ernest Engman
aka
SGT Rock



2010 Edition

Benton MacKaye Thru-Hikers Guide

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Town maps created, data compiled, and information edited by Ernest Engman.
Any mistakes are his fault and no one elses.

Cover Photo: Paul "Mags" Magnanti resting in the Smokies courtesy of Mags himself.
And he is another 300 miler. Thanks Mags.

Trail overview maps courtesy of the National Forrest Service and National Park Service
with extra data added by Ernest Engman. Any errors are also his fault.

A big thanks to Chris Johnson aka "Mr. Parkay" for compiling the terrain profile and mileages
used throughout this guide. He hiked the whole thing with a GPS - hard work!

Mileage and elevation data compiled by Ernest Engman and verified using Chris Johnsons track
and the BMTA databook. If anything doesn't match up it is probably also his fault.

Kudos to David "Awol" Miller who helped me sort through getting the guide published and
inspired me with some of his innovative ideas about trail guides. He is a genius.
Without Awol this would still be a file sitting on my hard drive.

Another big thanks to Bill "Hatman" Ristom who helped get me started in the BMTA and provided
some of the information I compiled during planning for my BMT thru-hike. This information became
the original draft of this guide. It's come a long way since then.

Special thanks to the tireless efforts of the BMTA in creating and maintaining this great trail.
Without them, the whole thing would not have been possible. And thanks to the members
of the BMTA that helped me ensure the data was correct with their Databook and great website:

www.BMTA.org

Everyone needs to join and/or support the BMTA.

And last - thanks to my family for putting up with my addiction to hiking.

For updates and errata information, please visit www.hikinghq.net/bmtaguide.html

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Benton MacKaye Trail Thru-Hikers' Guide

This guide is written with the expectation that the reader is most likely someone with some backpacking experience. With that in mind, the same old boring information about first aid, hanging food, treating water, and other "filler" that normally populates the front of hiking guides has been left out of this one. I figure that most people have their own system and telling them one more time at the front of a hiking guide is a waste of space and the hikers' time. Backpacking has inherent dangers that a hiker already accepts such as hypothermia, getting lost, lightning, bears, snakes, dehydration, crazed hillbillies, rabid critters, and many others that are out there to deal with but would take pages to mention.

What one finds here is a listing of the Benton MacKaye Trail with points to use to navigate the way along the trail and listings of known services that the long distance hiker normally needs in order to re-supply, re-fit, and rest as needed when undertaking a long distance hike.

A special note on water. This guide does not list every possible water source available since these sources are often based on the weather and season. I also do not guarantee the presence of water in the sources listed or the potability of these sources.

This guide is as up to date as it can be at the time it was put together. Re-locations happen regularly and navigation skills are required on any trail. Hikers should not rely solely on this book as their navigation aid. Maps and a compass should be utilized and one should be competent in their employment. Blazed in white diamonds most places, the Benton MacKaye Trail passes through some areas where blazing is not allowed and often relies on the fact that an experienced hiker can follow a trail without a marking every 100' to keep him on track. This is not a joke - experienced hikers who have thousands of miles on various trails have gotten off track on the BMT.

To hike the Benton MacKaye Trail, the following maps should be used:

Mile points	Map Name	Title	Additional Resources
0.0 - 82.6	Trails Illustrated map #777	Springer & Cohutta Mountains	<i>"Hiking The Benton MacKaye Trail"</i> by Tim Homan
56.3 - 191.4	Trails Illustrated map #781	Tellico and Ocoee Rivers	<i>"Benton MacKaye Trail Guide - Tennessee/North Carolina Section"</i> by Elizabeth Carter and Richard Harris
179.2 - 287.6	Trails Illustrated map #229	Great Smoky Mountains National Park Map	<i>"Hiking Trails Of The Smokies"</i> (aka The Brown Book)

Location listings in this guide have been kept brief and to the point. The purpose of this guide is not to tell a hiker how to hike the trail or to endorse any particular service provider. As such, most subjective comments are left out. Hikers can form their own opinions of places along the trail. In some cases there is more than one service provider available in a town (i.e. hotels, groceries, etc.) are listed. I have tried to select the ones that are nearest to the trail, the most convenient to use, or have the best normal rates available. Also, businesses come and go - so be aware that we can never be completely accurate at all times. Walking miles to use a service should be done based on the hiker's best decision making for individual need, the probability that the business will still be there, and the probability the business will be open. I do not guarantee that the service providers will always have what is wanted or needed.

Additional resources listed above are publications where one can find more in-depth information about the Benton MacKaye Trail sections. As I mentioned, this is a guide used to help you navigate and find services - I've left in-depth trail descriptions to the experts. If you want to know more about the trail as you walk it, I suggest checking these resources out. The first two are available directly from the BMTA at www.bmta.org.

Final note. I started this guide in 2007 while planning and preparing for a 2008 thru-hike. At that time there was not any sort of guide that met my needs as a long distance hiker. I created my own guide to use on then. Since that trip I have been working on improving what I used in order to help other long distance hikers enjoy this great trail. I hope you find this guide helpful and I hope users have as great a time on the Benton MacKaye Trail as I did.

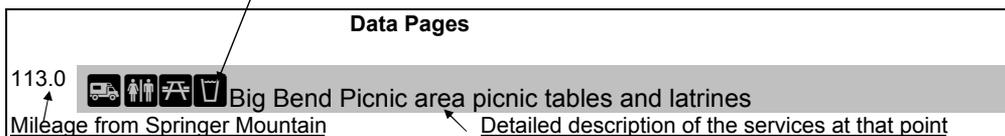
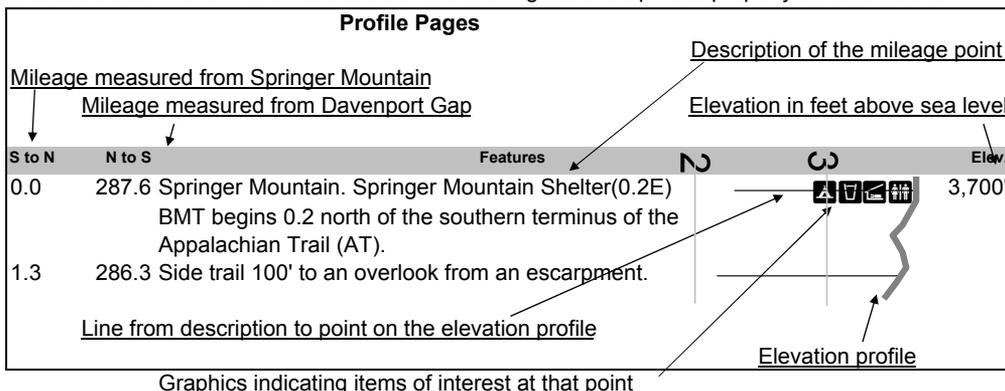
In an effort to keep the descriptions as brief as possible, a standardized set of abbreviations and symbols are used to describe these listings.

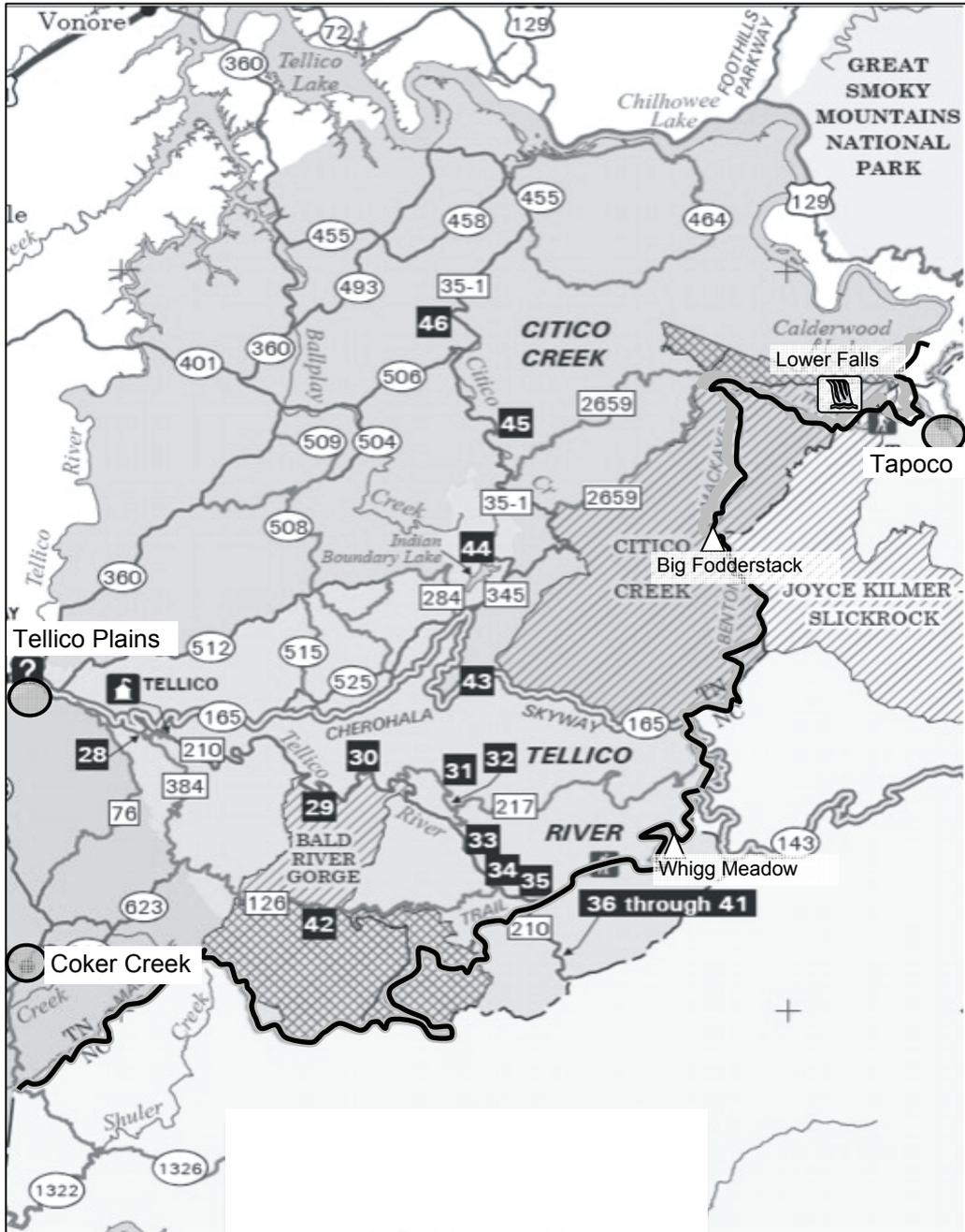
	Showers		Grocery		Medical Care
	Hostel		Privy		Mail Drop
	Public Restroom		Information		ATM
	Internet Computer		Pay Campsite		Ranger Station
	Meals		Post Office	Jan	January
	Picnic Area		Shuttle	Feb	February
	Phone		Campsite	Mar	March
	Lodging		Shelter	Apr	April
	Road		Outfitter	May	May
	Fire Tower		Water	Jun	June
Mo	Monday	ST	Short Term	Jul	July
Tu	Tuesday	LT	Long Term	Aug	August
We	Wednesday	W	West	Sep	September
Th	Thursday	E	East	Oct	October
Fr	Friday	N	North	Nov	November
Sa	Saturday	S	South	Dec	December
Su	Sunday	p	PM	a	AM

Mileage listings where there are service providers will also be highlighted in gray to help identify them

In an effort to make this guide the best possible, please help us to maintain the most current information possible. If you have an update you would like to submit or a suggestion of how to make it better, please feel free to e-mail the editor at guidebook@hikinghq.net.

The guide is broken into 20 mile sections. On the right page the trail is listed in sequence with mileage points shown along with where they hit on the trail elevation profile. On the left page is a more detailed description of the point when it is needed such as town listings or where the trail crosses areas where hikers need to be aware of things such as private property considerations.



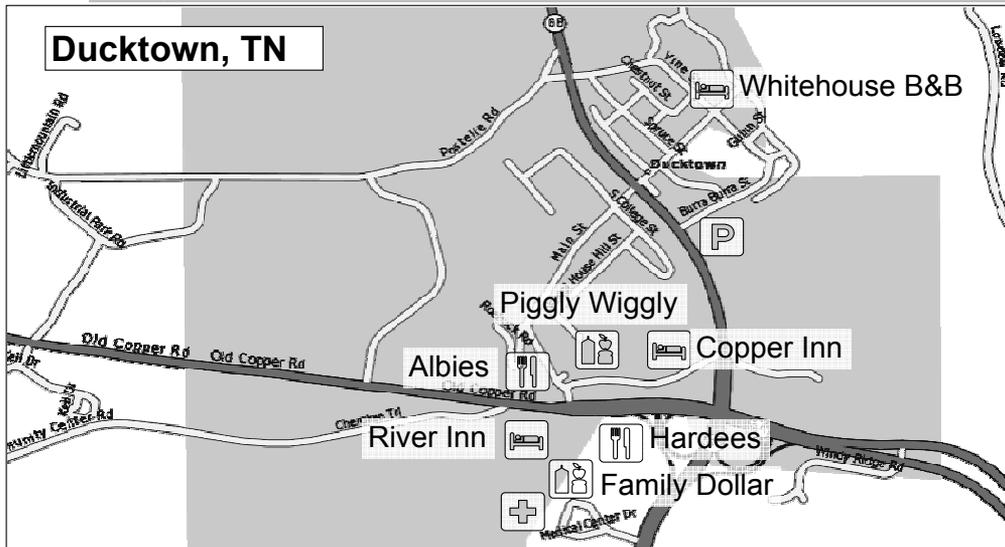


Map from the National Forest Service with added information by Ernest Engman

91.1  Thunder Rock Campground. (On BMT). Follow road past bathhouse (locked Nov-Mar) and comfort stations. Walk in campground with tent pads, fire rings, picnic tables, \$12 per night.

91.4  US 64/74. Highway leads 16.8 W to Parkville, TN or 7.2 E to Ducktown, TN.

 Olympic Whitewater Center. Directions: 1.1 E. 4400 Hwy. 64, Copper Hill, TN 37317 (877) 692-6050. Hours: 9a-5p Daily. Notes: This was the site of the 1996 Olympic Kayak competition. Services: Pay phone, water, soda and vending machines Good place to call for a shuttle to Ducktown www.fs.fed.us/r8/ocoe.



 **Ducktown, TN** - Directions: 7.2 E on Hwy 64. Notes: Ducktown is a small town with most services needed by long-distance hikers. Services: PO, Grocery Store, Gas Stations, Motel, Restaurants.

 **US Post Office.** 1656 Highway 68 Ducktown, TN 37326 423-496-5467. Hours: 830a-4p Mo-Tu & Th-Fr, 830a-12p We, Sa.

 **Ducktown Copper Inn.** US 64 Tn 68 Ducktown, TN 37326 (423) 496-5541. \$56 per night. Laundry available. Can do shuttles. Internet computer available for guests to use.

 **River Inn.** US 64 Tn 68 Ducktown, TN 37326 (877) 546-2633. \$64 per night.

 **Groceries - Piggly Wiggly.** 125 Five Points Dr Ducktown, TN 37326 (423) 496-7555. Services: LT Re-supply.

 **Family Dollar** LT Re-supply Mo-Fr 8a-9p Su 10a-8p.

 **Medical Care - Copper Basin Medical Center.** 144 Medical Center Dr, Copper Hill, TN 37317 (423) 496-5511. <http://copperbasin.org>.

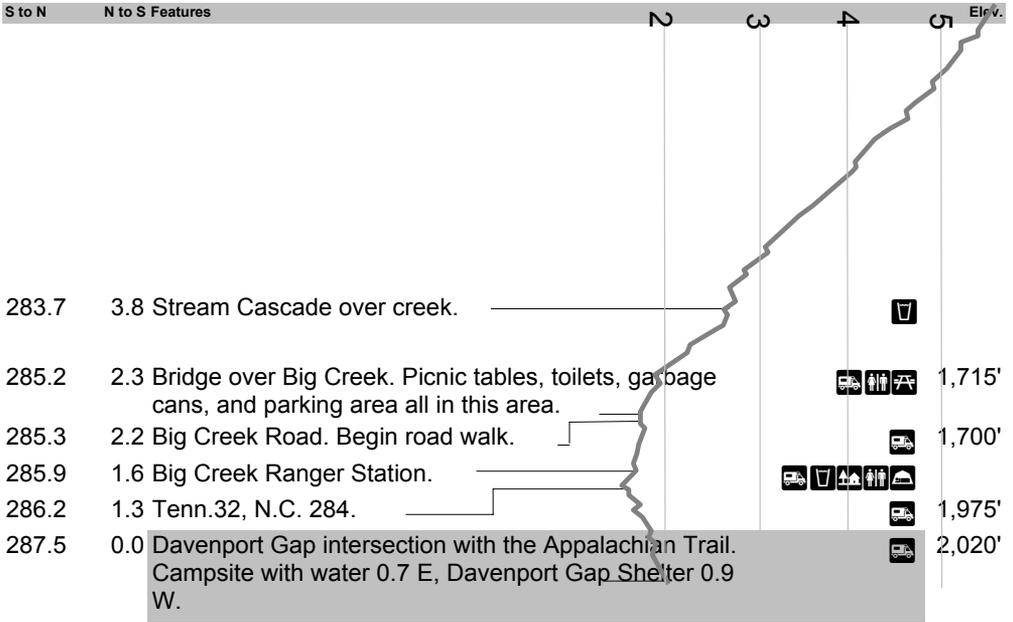
 **Meals - Albies and Hardees.**

Continued on page 17

S to N	N to S Features	Elev.
80.2	207.3 Double Spring Gap. Springs right and left here. Tennessee/Georgia State line.	3,190'
81.0	206.5 Intersect Licklog Trail (#65) leads 5.4 NE to FS 221.	
81.4	206.1 Pass spring W of trail.	
81.5	206.0 Intersect Big Frog Trail (#64). Big Frog Mountain with overlook is 100' on a side trail.	4,224'
82.6	204.9 Intersect Big Creek Trail (#68). Views to the E and NE from this part of the ridge crest of Chimneytop.	3,760'
83.4	204.1 Intersect Fork Ridge Trail (#69). Water 0.2 W on Big Frog Trail, then 0.1 E downhill at big oak.	
84.1	203.4 Stream 0.2 W on an unmarked side trail.	2,850'
85.2	202.3 Intersect Rough Creek Trail (#70) at saddle on ridgeline.	2,260'
85.7	201.8 Cross small stream. Just beyond, cross West Fork of Rough Creek.	1,840'
85.8	201.7 Intersect West Fork Trail.	1,840'
87.1	200.4 Cross stream and leave West Fork Trail.	1,670'
88.0	199.5 FS 221. Begin road walk.	1,900'
89.4	198.1 Reach low point. Ascend into cove, cross stream and switchback hard right.	1,410'
89.7	197.8 FS 45. Leads 1.8 W to FS 221 and 1.0 E to Ocoee #3 Powerhouse at the Ocoee River.	1,500'
90.8	196.7 Reach south bank of Ocoee River. Follow trail along riverbank, upstream.	1,120'
91.1	196.4 Thunder Rock Campground.	1,120'
91.4	196.1 US 64/74. Highway leads 16.8 W to Parkville, TN or 7.2 E to Ducktown, TN.	1,120'
93.3	194.2 Rock Creek Trail Intersection. BMT continues straight.	
95.0	192.5 Unnamed Mountain.	2,800'
95.4	192.1 Dry Pond Lead Trail. The BMT turns left here, the DPL continues straight.	2,850'
96.7	190.8 Deep Gap, power line, Kimsey Mountain Highway. Trail turns right before reaching the gate.	2,220'
97.4	190.1 Brock Mountain.	2,400'
98.1	189.4 Kimsey Mountain Highway.	2,060'
99.2	188.3 Piney Flats Branch. Descend to the creek, cross, then ascend.	

-  Parkway Market - LT resupply. 1127 Parkway. (865) 436-6364.
-  Whole Earth Grocer - LT resupply. 446 E Parkway. (865) 436-6967.
-  Restaurants - Lots of fast food and restaurant choices. AYCE: Shoney's.
-  Bales Motel 800-458-8249. Hotel next door allows guests to use laundry. Will hold drops for guests arranged in advanced 221 Bishop Ln. \$30 and up ask for hiker rate.
-  Grand Prix (865) 436-4561 offers shuttles, internet computer, and laundry. \$30 and up. Will hold packages for guests. 235 Ski Mountain Rd.
-  Family Inn (865) 436-3300/800-468-6326218 Ski Mountain Rd. Will hold packages for guests arranged in advance. \$40 and up. www.familyinnsgatlinburg.com.
-  Red Roof Inn (865) 436-7813 Whirlpool Jacuzzi for guest use. Free breakfast. Accepts mail drops for guests 309 Ownby St. 10% discount for hikers. www.redroofgatlinburg.com .
-  **P** US Post Office - 1216 E Parkway, Gatlinburg, TN 37738 - (865) 436-3229 hours: 9a-5p Mo-Fr 9a-11a Sa.

- 287.5  Davenport Gap intersection with the Appalachian Trail. Campsite with water 0.7 E, Lodging and Meals 2.4 E at Standing Bear Hostel on AT.
-  **Davenport Gap Shelter** (RATIONED) with water 0.9 SW on the AT.
-  Lodging - Standing Bear Hostel. Directions: 2.4 NE on the AT then 0.1 W on Green Corner Rd to Hostel. 4255 Green Corner Rd., Hartford, TN 37753 (423) 487-0014. Notes: operated by Maria and Curtis Owen; \$20pp cabin, \$15 bunkhouse or tent site, includes hot shower, laundry, phone, Internet, kitchen; camp store with enough Trail foods and supplies to get you to Hot Springs or Fontana, including stove fuels by the ounce plus cook-your-own pizzas and sandwiches; dog-friendly; shuttles available; parking \$2 per day; debit and credit cards accepted; for all services without stay, donations accepted; whitewater rafting trips on the Pigeon River. Holds packages. <http://standingbearfarm.tripod.com>, cvowen@planet.com



Notes:

Post Office List

<u>Town</u>	<u>Zip Code</u>	<u>Milepoint</u>	<u>Address / Phone Number</u>	<u>Hours of Operation</u>
Suches, GA	30572	17.9	(706) 747-2611 3605 State Highway 60, Suches, GA	730a-430p Mo-Fr 730a-1130a Sa
Blue Ridge, GA	30513	48.5	(706) 632-2721 273 Orvin Lance Dr Blue Ridge, GA	800a-430p Mo-Fr 9a-12p Sa
Cherry Log, GA	30522	48.5	(706) 635-2705 300 Cherry Log St, Cherrylog, GA	730a-430p Mo-Fr 730a-1130a Sa
Ellijay, GA	30540	48.5	(706) 635-4356 801 Industrial Blvd, Ellijay, GA	830a-5p Mo-Fr 830a-1145a Sa
Ducktown, TN	37326	91.4	(423) 496-5467 1656 N Highway 68, Ducktown, TN	830a-4p Mo-Tu, Th-Fr 830a-12p We, Sa
Benton, TN (Parksville)	37307	91.4	(423) 338-5021 188 Main St, Benton, TN	8a-430p Mo-Fr 8a-12p Sa
Reliance, TN	37369	108.5	423-338-2373 Highway 30 Reliance, TN	Unknown at this time
Delano, TN	37325	108.5	(423) 263-7282 9673 Highway 411, Delano, TN	745a-345p Mo-Fr 8a-11a Sa
Coker Creek, TN	37314	123.8	(423) 261-2286 12197 New Hwy 68 Coker Creek, TN	10a-2p Mo-Fr 10a-12p Sa
Tellico Plains, TN	37385	151.3	(423) 253-2218 171 Bank St, Tellico Plains, TN	830a-4p Mo-Fr 9a-12p Sa
Robbinsville, NC	28771	183.1	(828) 479-3397 74 Sweetwater Rd, Robbinsville, NC	830a-4p Mo-Fr 10a-12p Sa
Fontana Dam, NC	28733	197.0	(828) 498-2315 50 Fontana Rd, Fontana Dam, NC	830a-430p Mo-Fr 10a-12p Sa
Bryson City, NC	28713	228.8	(828) 488-3481 130 Slope St Bryson City, NC	830a-5p Mo-Fr 10a-12p Sa
Cherokee, NC	28719	254.4	(828) 497-3891 671 Tsali Blvd, Cherokee, NC	9a-430p Mo-Fr 10a-1130a Sa
Gatlinburg, TN	37738	254.4	(865) 436-3229 1216 E Parkway Gatlinburg, TN	9a-5p Mo-Fr 9a-11a Sa
Hartford, TN	37753	287.5	(423) 487-2180 3603 Hartford Rd, Hartford, TN	830a-345p Mo-Fr 9a-11a Sa

Getting to the BMT and hiking considerations

Keep in mind that the Benton MacKaye Trail is not as well known as the AT, so the services supporting the trail are not as robust as other trails such as the Appalachian Trail. With that thought in mind, I've added this section to try and help new BMT hikers plan a long distance or thru-hike. Now I know in the introduction of this guide I said I wouldn't tell a hiker how to hike the BMT and hopefully this section will not seem like me trying to tell anyone how to do this.

I have included overview maps of the BMT in this guide with roads that cross the trail so that a hiker can navigate to the trail heads throughout the BMT corridor. Additionally, I have been working with some of the regular AT shuttle people to help familiarize them with the BMT so that there are more options for hikers to make connections for their hikes. The following list are some that I have worked with in one way or another:

From south to north along the trail:

- S** Coolbreeze - located at Mountain Crossings along the AT in North GA. 813-470-9777. Coolbreeze operates mainly in North GA but services the entire length of the BMT. Additionally, if a hiker needed to hit an outfitter prior to starting the BMT, parking near Mountain Crossings and getting a shuttle from Coolbreeze to Springer Mountain is a good option.
- S** David R. Hopes - Classic Transportation of the Tri-State Inc. Blue Ridge/Copper Hill, GA (706) 633-3668. Mainly operates in North Georgia and the Tri-State Area of North Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia. He can transport up to four hikers and gear from Atlanta or Chattanooga airports to Amicalola Falls or Springer Mountain for \$125 for first hiker, \$10 additional; pets welcome. Also local service around Blue Ridge/Ducktown to all BMT trail connectors from GA to TN/NC. Offers lodging in their home. classictowncar@bellsouth.net www.classictransportationofthetristate.com.
- S** Jeff Hoch - located at the Hike Inn near Fontana Dam on the AT. 828-479-3677. Jeff operates around the Tennessee/North Carolina area but provides service on most of the BMT. Additionally, if a hiker needed re-supply or other services before entering the Smokies or just after finishing the park southbound, The Hike Inn would provide a good place for the hiker to go.
- S** Jude Julius - Bryson City, NC (2 miles from A.T. at Wesser/NOC) (828) 488-6399 [home] (828) 736-0086 [cell] Springer Mtn, GA to Hot Springs, NC. Call for rates.
- S** Bill "Graywolf" Johnson - located in Cherokee and runs Appalachian Services 828 507-7833. Graywolf mainly operates around the Great Smoky Mountain National Park but services the entire BMT. Additionally, he can kennel and/or transport a dog around the park for hikers that have a dog coming along with them. He also runs a service that will pick you up from anywhere within a days drive from the trail and drop you off so that you don't have to worry about getting to the trail and long term parking for your car.
- S** Curtis Owen - located at the Standing Bear Farms Hostel in Davenport Gap 423-487-0014. Curtis mainly operates around the GSMNP but has been known to go farther out as needed to help hikers. Additionally, Curtis's place is on the AT and close to the start of the trail at Davenport Gap. A hiker could leave a vehicle at Curtis's place and either get a shuttle to Springer Mountain to hike back to his car; or hike south to Springer and get a shuttle back here when finished. Curtis also has resupply and a place to stay for hikers connecting the BMT to the AT.

In 1921 Benton MacKaye proposed building a system of trails along the ridges of the Appalachian Mountains. His idea eventual became what is today's Appalachian Trail. When he conceived of that system of trails, there were to be feeder trails that would bring hikers from across the region into the main trail system

In 1979 a group of hikers recognized the need to start building those other trails as part of the trail system that Benton MacKaye envisioned. 26 years later that vision was finally realized with the opening of the Benton MacKaye Trail - a new long distance trail that honors the memory of the father of the Appalachian Trail system by bestowing his name on nearly 300 miles of new trail.



"To walk. To see. To see what you see."

...Benton MacKaye

The Benton MacKaye Trail starts on the top of Springer Mountain in Georgia 0.2 miles north of the Appalachian Trail Terminus. From there it generally tracks west of the Appalachian Trail for approximately 200 miles before crossing it again in the Smokies. During this time the Benton MacKaye Trail crosses over 5,000'+ tall mountains and as travels low as 765' at the Hiwassee river in Reliance, TN. Once it crosses the Appalachian Trail in the Smokies, it continues to the Eastern side of the park, eventually finishing at Davenport Gap on the Appalachian Trail.

During this passage, the Benton MacKaye Trail strives to give the backpacker a more remote wilderness experience than it's big brother the Appalachian Trail. Nearly 2/3 of the trail passes through designated wilderness areas and the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. During this nearly 300 mile route, the trail has only two shelters, many of these miles are not blazed, and there are few, if any, trail structures.

So, if a new wilderness experience is what you are out to find, the Benton MacKaye is waiting for you.

This guide's aim is to help promote the use of the Benton MacKaye trail for the long distance backpacker. At the same time I hope to preserve the feeling of remoteness and maintain the possibility that hikers still have something to discover. In writing this guide I have done my best to balance providing the long distance hiker the tools they need to thru-hike the Benton MacKaye Trail without descibing every mile of that trail. My hope is you enjoy what the Benton MacKaye Trail is and what it has to offer as much as I have. I am sure you will find this guide exactly what you need, and find that the Benton MacKaye Trail is more than you could hope for.



Ernest Engman
AKA
SGT Rock

Bar Code Space Holder

\$9.95

