

BMTA Annual Walk-thru Report

Section(s) Evaluated: _____ Sections 11 Double Springs Gap to US64 _____

Direction walked (circle one): -northbound- -southbound-

Evaluator(s) Name(s) _____ Jeff Hunter & Rick Harris _____

Evaluation Date: _____ July 8-9, 2009 _____

Work hours: _____ 58 _____ Travel Hours: _____ 10 _____

Reporting Evaluator's phone #: _____

Please see the reverse side (or below, if online) for evaluator suggestions and for a quick review of BMTA standards to use as a basis for your evaluation.

Overall assessments: Rate each category 1-5, with 3 being "ok" and 5 being "excellent."

Treadway (1-5) _____ 4 _____

Corridor Clearance (1-5) _____ 4 _____

Blazes, Signs and Trailmarkers (1-5) _____ 5 _____

Overall rating for the section (1-5) _____ 4 _____

Comments on problem areas (be as specific as you can on location):

Section 11 – Double Springs Gap to US64. Jeff Hunter and Rick Harris backpacked from Dally Gap to US64 over 2 days. They started at Dally Gap at 11AM on Wed, hiking the 1 mile up to the BMT at Spanish Oak Gap, then north on the BMT past the Penitentiary Branch Trail, Hemp Top, and to Double Springs. This section of trail is in good condition except for the need to brush out high weeds from the Penitentiary Trailhead and along the edge of Hemp Top. There were a few minor blowdowns, nothing hikers can't easily get around. We reached Double Springs Gap and got water at the spring on the west side, then headed up toward Big Frog. There were 13 trees across the trail, 3 of which will require crosscut saw due to their size. We also cleared several small trees with our hand saw which are not counted in the 13. Also, general brushing out is needed along this entire segment. About half way up there is need to repair the outslope with pulaskis for a hundred feet or so. We saw a bear at the Licklog Trail intersection which growled at us. He looked like he was about 150 pounds. Also we saw two garter snakes. We arrived on top of Big Frog about 4 PM in the middle of a big thunder storm which lasted 30 minutes or so. The area around the camp sites on the top are quite overgrown. After the thunder storm subsided, we set up our tents, ate supper, then hung our food in a tree, then to our tents to listen to iPod and music on cell phone and to read.

It was quite windy much of the night. In the morning we awoke to blue skies and cool temperatures, ate breakfast and broke camp, getting on the trail about 8AM.

In general, the trail to US64 is in quite good shape with only a few blowdowns and some areas which definitely need brushing out. The trees are marked below:

From Big Frog:

- Mile 0.23 Tree
- Mile 1.12 Tree
- Mile 1.9 Big Frog Trail Intersection
- Mile 2.44 Tree 18" diameter
- Mile 3.07 2 dead trees
- Mile 3.64 2 trees close together
- Mile 3.7 Tree
- Mile 4.0 Rough Trail Intersection upper end on ridgeline
- Mile 4.15 Tree
- Mile 4.21 Tree
- Mile 4.7 Rough Creek Trail lower end at creek
- Mile 5.3 Tree
- Mile 5.4 Tree
- Mile 5.5 Tree
- Mile 6.0 Tree
- Mile 6.4 Tree
- Mile 6.6 Tree
- Mile 7.9 FS 221 Crossing
- Mile 8.6 FS 45 Crossing
- Mile 9.1 Tree
- Mile 9.3 Tree
- Mile 9.6 Tree crossing both arms near a switchback
- Mile 9.7 Tree shortly before entering Thunder Rock Campground road
- Mile 10.0 Thunder Rock Campground Gate by entrance station

As to brushing out, the worst is the section from Big Frog Mtn down the first couple of miles and also from FS 45 for about half of this way toward Thunder Rock Campground.

As to blazing, no painted blazes are permitted in the wilderness. However, the blazes do need to be touched up on the stretch between FS 45 and the Thunder Rock Campground. Also, the Big Frog Wilderness sign at Double Springs Gap is nearly destroyed (?by bears) and needs to be replaced and a sign needs to be placed here for the BMT with

distances each direction.

On the way down from Big Frog, down along Rough Creek, Jeff got attacked by yellow jackets while moving a log off the trail and sustained 5 stings around his ankles. His ankles were quite swollen and itchy the next morning.

I suggest we make a special trip sometime to clear the trees and brush out from Double Springs Gap to the top of Big Frog, then down Big Frog to FS 221. We could backpack in via Dally Gap and clear to the top of Big Frog that same afternoon, camping on top of Big Frog. Perhaps also we could take in a Pulaski or two to fix the section of the trail about half way up from Double Springs to Big Frog. Then the next day we could go down the BMT to FS 221, clearing logs and brush along the way. We could make a separate short trip from FS 45 to Thunder Rock Campground to clear logs and brush on that short segment.

Suggested process for evaluators

1. Carry the section map, a small notebook and a pen as you hike.
2. Note problem areas as you walk, using the section map to fix the location.
3. Fill out this form later, using your notes.
4. Submit the completed form ASAP, either in person, by mail, or online. (addresses below)

BMTA evaluation guidelines

- 1) **Treadway condition:** The treadway standard is 18" wide, with a slight tilt to the outside. Does the sidehilling need refreshing? Are the water diversions clear and working? Significant erosion damage? Signs of ATV use? ATV damage? Are there muddy or wet areas.
- 2) **Corridor Vegetation Clearance:** The BMT standard is 4'x8' clearance. But this ideal is not always sustained throughout the growing season. The operative question is, can a tall hiker with a big pack walk the trail comfortably without snagging or ducking? Also, are briars and poison ivy cut back enough for a person in hiking short to comfortably pass? Where these standards are not maintained, note problem spots.
- 3) **Blazes:** Where the trail is well defined and there are no intersections, blazes should be crisp, clear, easily visible, and about 150 yards apart. Are intersections clearly blazed? Try to check intersections from both directions. This is a key area where your new set of eyes can be helpful to the maintainer.
- 4) **Tree blowdowns:** Report any blowdowns too high to step over, that block the trail. Provide location as near as you can, and indicate the smallest cutting tool sufficient to clear it: Folding pruning saw, bowsaw, or chainsaw?
- 5) **Signs and trailmarkers:** The BMT standard in GA is a road sign (each way) at each trail crossing of a public road. Also, Carsonite posts and trailmarker decals about 50 to 100 yards in to the woods from each trailhead. Are signs or trailmarkers, damaged or missing? TN/NC standards vary with the district.

Return this sheet

When completed, ASAP, to the appropriate BMTA Maintenance Director:

* For GA: Tom Keene, 1641 Lucy Drive, Kennesaw, GA 30152 or call for email address.

* For TN/NC: Rick Harris, 533 Shaw Mountain Road, Tellico Plains, TN 37385 or call for email.

TO SUBMIT ONLINE: (a) Fill out this blank form, (b) save completed form, and
(c) Send as an email attachment.