

#8

Outdoor Adventure: Benton MacKaye Trail Access Points

- 1 Springer Mountain (Terminus)
- 2 Big Stamp Gap
- 3 Three Forks
- 4 Toccoa River & Swinging Bridge
- 5 Hwy 60, southern crossing
- 6 Skeenah Gap
- 7 Wilscot Gap, Hwy 60, northern crossing
- 8 Dial Rd.
- 9 Shallowford Bridge
- 10 Fall Branch Falls
- 11 Weaver Creek Rd.
- 12 Georgia Hwy 515
- 13 Boardtown Road
- 14 Bushy Head Gap
- 15 Dyer Gap
- 16 Watson Gap
- 17 Jacks River Trail (Dally Gap)
- 18 Thunder Rock Campground
- Welcome Center
- BMT Headquarters

▽ Getting to Aska Road: From Highway 515, turn onto Windy Ridge Road, go one block to the 3 way stop intersection, then turn left and make a quick right onto Aska Road.



FANNIN COUNTY
CHAMBER & CVB



Get the free App!
www.blueridgemountains.com/App.html



The hiking trails of Fannin County include some of the most legendary in the USA. The Benton MacKaye (pronounced mack-eye) and Appalachian Trails begin here and wind throughout the county. Whether you are out for a day hike or a longer multi-day hike, Blue Ridge has been designated as the first Benton MacKaye Trail Trail Town, a perfect starting point for your hike and picking up gear and supplies.

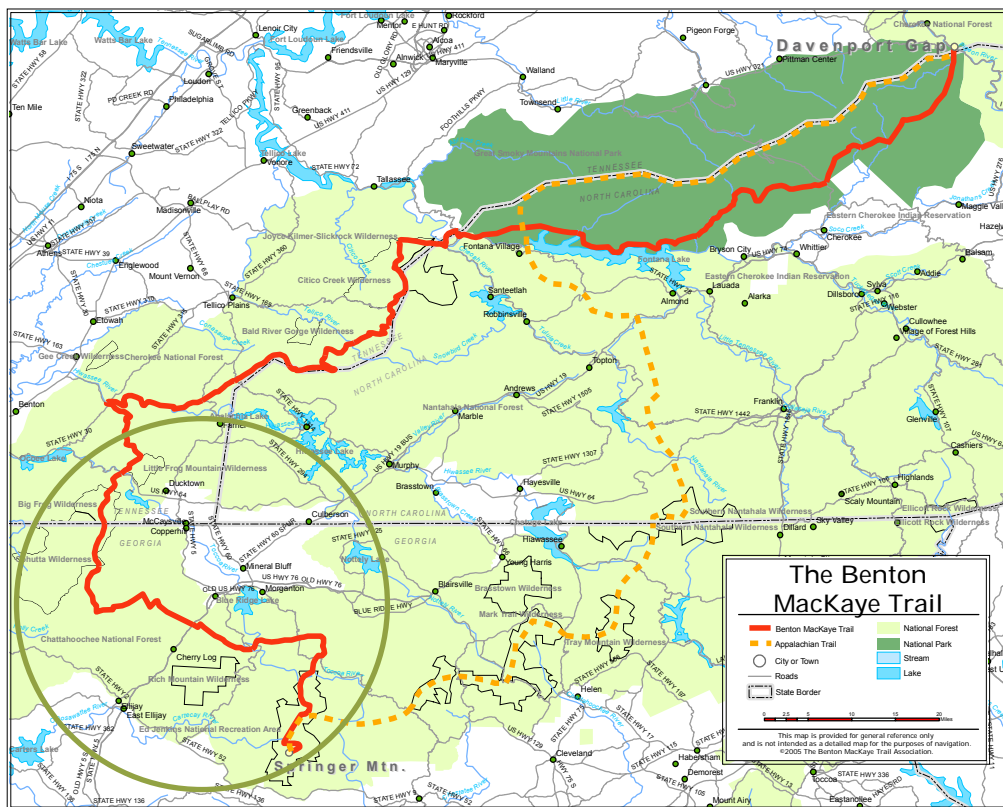
The Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT) is a footpath of nearly 300 miles (480 km) through the Appalachian mountains of the southeastern United States. It is designed for foot travel in the tradition of the Appalachian Trail (AT). For detailed info consult the excellent Benton MacKaye Trail Association web site at www.bmta.org for maps, mileages and important info, and the US Forest Service web site at www.fs.fed.us/conf/. Buy and carry **Trails Illustrated map #777**. This guide is meant only for general reference. Numbers below reference the map on the front for some of the more popular access points:

FROM THE START, SOUTH OF BLUE RIDGE:

1 Springer Mountain. This is the starting point of both the BMT and the Appalachian Trail. From Blue Ridge, take Aska Rd., 13.5 miles until it dead ends into Newport Road. Turn right on Newport Road, go 4.5 miles until it dead ends into Doublehead Gap. Turn right on Doublehead Gap and go 2 miles to FS road 42 (on the left). Turn left and go approximately 6.5 to 7 miles to parking area on your left at Big Stamp Gap. From the parking lot take the trail back across the road for a .9 mile hike to the summit. Parking lot - **N 34°38.262' W084°11.712'**

3 Three Forks. A junction of the Benton MacKaye Trail and Appalachian Trail. Go 13.5 miles south on Aska Road to its end. Turn right onto Newport Road, go 4.5 miles to end. Turn left onto Doublehead Gap Road, cross a concrete bridge and come to a dirt gravel road. Continue on this road .3 miles to the intersection with dirt-gravel FS Road 58, intersecting sharply from the right. Turn right (east) into the forest and drive 5.3 miles to Three Forks. Noontootla Creek is on the right as you drive. The trail begins on the north side of the road (on the left). **N 34°39.815' W084°11.053'**

4 Swinging Bridge. A 260-foot suspension bridge crosses the Toccoa River on the Benton MacKaye Trail. From the intersection of Hwy 515 and Hwy 5 (McDonalds) in Blue Ridge, follow Hwy 515 East approximately 4 miles to the traffic light at Hwy 60. Turn right and go to the stop sign; then turn left on Hwy 60. Go 1.5 miles into Morganton, then turn



green circle references detail map area on front

right on Hwy 60 South toward Dahlonega for 11.3 miles passing Skeenah Mill. Another .7 miles on the right is FS 816, turn right and follow ROUGH gravel road about 3 miles to the parking area. Short hike down to the Toccoa River, BMT & Swinging Bridge. Parking lot - **N 34°44.350' W084°10.213'**

10 Fall Branch Falls. A double waterfall with mountain laurel and rhododendron growing along the trail and creek bank. The hike to the falls is about 30 minutes round trip. In Blue Ridge, follow Aska Road south for eight miles. Turn right on Stanley Creek Rd. (Toccoa Riverside Restaurant is on the left). The trailhead is about three miles on the right (.2 miles from where pavement ends). Parking lot - **N 34°47.017' W084°18.166'** Waterfall - **N 34°47.198' W084°18.370'**

FROM WEST OF BLUE RIDGE:

15 & 16 Dyer Gap & Watson Gap. From Blue Ridge travel north on Hwy 5 for 3.9 miles to Hwy 2, take a left and go west on Hwy 2 until the road turns into a gravel Forest Service road to Watson Gap. From the four-way intersection at Watson Gap turn left and drive approximately 2.5 miles to Dyer Gap. It is highly recommended to get the USFS map of the Cohutta Wilderness, and carry the 10 essentials.

17 Dally Gap From Blue Ridge travel north on Hwy 5 for 3.9 miles to Hwy 2 and go west until the road turns into a gravel Forest Service road to Watson Gap. From the four-way intersection at Watson Gap turn right and uphill onto FS 22, then go 3.4 miles to the trailhead at Dally Gap.

18 Thunder Rock Campground. This is a nice place to stop, park and start a hike or set up shuttles for long hikes. From Blue Ridge take GA 5 north to McCaysville, then turn left on Tennessee Highway 68. In Ducktown, take U.S. 64 west to the Thunder Rock Campground on the left.

A Word to the Wise ... Be prepared for wilderness and carry the 10 Essentials (wiki or Google it). Get info from www.bmta.org and the USFS web site at www.fs.fed.us/conf/. Buy and carry a copy of the excellent Trails Illustrated map #777 for detailed terrain and trail info. The law of the forest is "leave no trace". See www.LNT.org for info. Please pack in all you will need and pack out all your trash. If you build a fire, never leave it unattended. Use good judgment when hiking, particularly around waterfalls where rocks are often wet, moss covered and slippery. If hiking during hunting season, wear a brightly colored vest.



FANNIN COUNTY
CHAMBER & CVB

Fannin County Chamber & Visitors
Bureau is located at 152A Orvin
Lance Drive, Blue Ridge, GA 30513
800-899-MTNS
www.BlueRidgeMountains.com
[facebook.com/blueridgegeorgia](https://www.facebook.com/blueridgegeorgia)