

Mountain High Hikers—General Meeting April 20, 2022

**Place and time of general meeting: Byron Herbert Reece Farm Pavillion, Blairsville, GA.
Potluck lunch, 12:00-2:00.**

The general meeting was called to order by **President George Owen**, at 1:00 PM. Everyone was thanked for coming especially in light of the fact that this was our first general meeting since 12/2018 due to the pandemic. A special thank you was given to Michele Powell for organizing the food and drinks and securing the beautiful pavilion.

Introduction of Board Members: Members of the Board who were present were introduced to the membership. They included: Sandy Jersey (Treasurer), Sue Astley (Secretary), Michael O'Brien (Maintenance Director), Richard Sullivan (Webmaster), Kim Blankenship (Conservation), Margie Hornsby (Membership), Michele Powell (Social Chairman). Board members absent due to travel or illness were Harriet Hoke (Vice President), Evelin Yarns (Past President) Linda Hiles (Hike Director) and Laurie Colombo (Publicity).

Since we have not had a general membership meeting since 12/2018 those present who had joined MHH since that time were asked to stand to be acknowledged and welcomed.

Committee Reports:

- **Secretary:** Since there were no additions, deletions or other changes to the last minutes they were approved as written.
- **Treasurer:** The treasurer reported we have \$12,057.55 in the MHH account which includes a significant donation from the Hamilton Gardens non-profit when it was dissolved and an additional \$400 plus/minus in a PayPal account. Some funds have been distributed to support trail maintenance and conservation.
- **Hikes:** A survey was distributed to the membership seeking input regarding any issues with the 3 types of hikes offered each week. There was nothing of note regarding the Tuesday hikes and they will continue as usual. Thursday Leisure hikes are the most popular. Feedback indicated they should be no longer than 5 miles and be at a pace comfortable for all participants. The hike committee which consists of the 3 hike coordinators, the hike director and president will continue to evaluate needs as necessary.
- **Trail Maintenance:** Michael O'Brien reported we are maintaining over 100 miles of trail in Georgia and N. Carolina. MHH has made the decision to cut back on some of our previously maintained trails and has prioritized what we feel we can successfully maintain with our current membership. We now have maintenance crew leaders, who assume responsibility similar to hike leaders. Currently crews are working on improvements to Panther Creek Falls and Chunky Gal. Tom Shope continues to maintain our tools. Michael encouraged others to come out and work and recognized some of our most dedicated volunteers...Richard Sullivan, Steve Dennison, Ann Burchfield, and Kim Blankenship among others. All of the volunteers who reach certain hourly milestones including Richard Sullivan (200 hours) and Kim Blankenship (100 hours) will be recognized and treated to a celebration at Michael O'Brien's home in May.

New Business:

George called attention to sheets found on each table which list the upcoming concerts at the

Byron Herbert Reece Pavilion throughout the summer. This has been coordinated and organized by MHH member Michele Powell. One group of special note is The Wilderness Pickers which include today's speaker Joe Boone. We encourage everyone to come when they can.

Speaker Introduction: President George Owen introduced today's speaker Mr. Joe Boone. Joe's career was as a scientist at the Centers for Disease Control but he has long been an active and involved member of the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club. His presentation included important information about the mission of GATC and its involvement in the maintenance and construction of parts of the trail including shelter and the importance of realizing this is a trail that is being "loved to death". There is focus on the future of this trail, as well as, the other long distance trails in Georgia (Benton McKaye, Pinhoti and Blue Ridge Bartram trail). We were encouraged to access the GATC website which has a wealth of information and instructive videos about the trail and how any of us can get involved in saving and securing this Georgia treasure.

At the conclusion of Mr. Boone's presentation there was no further business and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Astley, Secretary

George Owen, President