

The Ridge Rambler



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President's Message

by Steve Foster

We had a great turnout for the SRPOA Annual Meeting held at the Walland Methodist Church on Saturday, July 16, with 39 Saddle Ridge households represented. The Event Committee, chaired by Ann Tedford, did a fantastic job of organizing the pre-meeting breakfast and getting everyone checked in and ballots distributed. The meeting started with introductions of our special guests, Lamar Stumpf and his wife, Amy. Lamar has done an outstanding job grading and improving our roads. Perry Burchfield was also recognized for his contributions to the barn area cleanup, donation of materials and labor to construct the new bridge, fence, and concealment wall near the barn, repair of the dam, and other road projects.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, August 31, 2016
at 7 pm – **Saddle Ridge Nature Walk** - at the pond

Monday, September 12, 2016
– **Saddle Ridge Book Club**

September 23-24, 2016 –
24th Annual Townsend Fall Heritage Festival and Old Timers Day

September 24, 2016 – **Blue Ribbon Country Fair** at the Great Smoky Mountains Heritage Center



Broad-winged hawk perched on edge of carrier before release.

Read "[On The Wild Side](#)"

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New residents, Dale and Karen Richardson, introduced themselves. They recently moved to Oakwood Road from Ohio. Roxanne and Larry Clapp introduced themselves noting they are happy to be spending more time up in Saddle Ridge. Patty Burchfield introduced herself and added that she and Perry are working on their new property at the entrance to Saddle Ridge.

Each of the 5 standing committees reported on their work for the past year. Darin Suggs reported on the work of the Road Committee and Architecture Committee. The Road Committee will now be made up of representative residents for each road to improve our ability to monitor and target areas in need of maintenance. Lynn Hopps reported that the Communications Committee continues to expand digital media: Facebook, *The Ridge Rambler*, the website, and emails, in addition to posting notices at the kiosk. Ann Tedford noted all the successful community events and thanked all the committee members for their work. As Chair of the Beautification Committee, Debra James reported on all the work performed by volunteers at cleanups and the barn lighting, and turned over the chair to Sue DuBois. Sue reported that the Board has developed a written charter for each of the 5 committees. In reviewing the role of the Beautification Committee it was decided to now call it the Environment Committee to better reflect the scope of the committee's responsibilities.

We owe Treasurer Smitty a big thanks for putting many hours into the SRPOA accounting records over the past year and diligently pursuing delinquent accounts. Smitty gave the Treasurer's Report summarizing that over \$2500 more was collected in POA dues this fiscal year, including \$10,609 collected in delinquent POA dues.

Elections were held to fill 3 board positions. Congratulations to our 2 new board members, Tom Braun and Ken LaValley. The third open spot will be filled by me for a second three year term. Debra James completed her second three-year term this year. Debra's contribution to the community, both in her role as Board Member and Chair of the Beautification Committee, are much appreciated. She organized many successful Cleanup days and made sure that Saddle Ridge common areas look their best.

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Get Involved

Committee Chairpersons

Events and Hospitality Committee

Ann Tedford

Environment Committee

Sue DuBois

Communications Committee

Lynn Hopps

Road Committee

Darin Suggs

Architectural Committee

Darin Suggs

Interests & Activities

Have an idea for a group activity?

Have a potluck recipe to share?

Please contact us at info@saddleridgepoa.com, and we will post it to our web site.

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We've made significant visual improvements in Saddle Ridge over the past year: a major cleanup of the barn area, a new roof on the barn (thanks to financial donations and community member's labor), relocation and painting of the trash shed, repair of targeted areas of Oakwood Road and Waters End, and installation of concrete slabs at the gate to prevent potholes. Neighbors have gathered for a number of community events: the Fall Cleanup, Annual Fall Cookout, Spring Cleanup, and Ladies Potluck. We've also improved communication and documentation: Event Guidelines for the barn area, Parking Guidelines for common areas, Charters for each of the standing committees, an updated community map, and *The Ridge Rambler*, all of which are viewable on the [Saddle Ridge website](#).

None of this would have been possible without the cooperation and efforts of volunteers dedicated to improving the community of Saddle Ridge. It was a productive year and we look forward to continuing with more improvements in 2016-2017. The SRPOA Board welcomes suggestions from members.

Board Announcements

Emergency Fire Exit: Do you have an evacuation plan in the event of a forest fire or flood? Did you know there is an emergency route out of Saddle Ridge if Saddle Ridge Road or East Millers Cove Road is blocked? ([link to SR map](#))



To access the emergency exit, take Chilhowee Loop to Bear Paw, left onto Bear Paw, right onto Scenic Drive, left onto Skytop then drive to the end of Skytop Road. Look for the National Park Boundary sign then proceed on foot for about 200 yards following the old logging road which leads to the Foothills Parkway. Emergency crews will pick up residents from the Foothills Parkway.

Thanks to the Carrolls and the Rules for maintaining the path.

Contact your SRPOA Board:

Email:

saddleridgepoa@gmail.com

Board members and committee chairs are listed below and also on the [Saddle Ridge website](#)

President:

Steve Foster
859-494-7299

Vice President:

Hugh Pearson
865-982-5729

Treasurer:

Smitty
(G. Robert Smith, Jr.)
615-631-5836

Secretary:

Lynn Hopps
865-984-7729

Recorder:

Ann Tedford
865-980-1757

Board Members:

Darin Suggs
865-804-6449

Sue DuBois
407-758-8275

Tom Braun
225-281-3889

Ken LaValley
865-970-6410



Gate work: Many thanks go out to Gary Niebert, Tom Braun, Darin Suggs, Hugh Pearson, Steve Foster, John Urban, and Perry Burchfield's crew of Tommy and Wayne, for their hard work in the middle of a very long night and into the hot day. They successfully installed concrete slabs at the gate that will end the persistent potholes and rewired the gate controls. This is the first round of slabs. There will be at least one more round that will extend the concrete far enough into Saddle Ridge to cover all of the area over which the gate swings. The next round will begin sometime after the weather cools down.



Pond: You may have noticed a layer of green vegetation spreading across the pond from the barn end. It has been spreading a little further each year. This green layer is native aquatic vegetation that takes hold as the depth of the water in the pond decreases due to sedimentation. These plants (pondweeds and naiads) provide habitat and food for beavers, ducks, fish, and other wildlife, and help oxygenate the pond. It's a normal, healthy part of pond life during the warmer months and also part of the normal succession as all ponds and lakes slowly fill in over time.

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Trail Cams

Ever wonder what might be wandering around out there at night.

For a sampling of night shots, [check out these photos](#) submitted by residents Liz Domingue, Sue DuBois, and Debbie Gungl.

Bear Magnets



Alex Wyss has some free TWRA bear magnets to distribute with tips for living in bear country. If you would like one, they'll be placed by the SRPOA mailbox for pickup on Wednesday, August 17.

Trash Barn

The garbage is picked up early Monday mornings. Please try to bring your garbage down no later than Sunday evening. This will make sure it gets hauled off on Monday and will help the folks that clean the barn on Monday. Thanks!

Sedimentation from road runoff causes some acceleration of this process. When the beaver deceiver was installed a few years ago to keep the drains clear and save the dam, it also decreased the depth of the pond. The SRPOA Board will be looking into options for reducing the rate of sedimentation from road runoff, but other control measures, such as herbicides or mechanical removal, or dredging, are not recommended at this time due to cost, ineffectiveness, and negative impact on what is a fairly healthy system.

Treasurer's Report: SRPOA treasurer, Smitty, sent the fiscal year 2015-2016 financial statements to all members for whom we have an e-mail address, in the week prior to the annual meeting. He also provided a financial update and overview during the annual meeting. Financial statements are available for review by all SRPOA members. If you did not receive a copy of the financial statements or have questions about them for Smitty, you can contact him at saddleridgepoa@gmail.com.

Poaching Season Alert: It's that time of year again, unfortunately, that we need to be on the watch for poachers on the road and in our woods. They are hunting for ginseng and other valuable plants that grow naturally on our hillsides. Last summer they parked on East Millers Cove Road and brazenly walked into Saddle Ridge. If you see suspicious people or cars, report it, take a picture of their car and license plate, check with your neighbors, post your sighting on our SR Facebook page so everyone can be on the lookout, and let a board member know. If you have any doubts, call the Blount County Sheriff's Office (865) 273-5000.

Spring and Summer Recap



Butternut tree stands tall by the creek , August 2015, and after it fell July 2016.

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Saddle Ridge Nature Walk

Wed, August 31, 2016 - 7 pm

Explore the plants and animals of our unique wetlands on a walk with our resident wetland ecologist, Alex Wyss, and naturalist, Liz Domingue. We'll meet at the gate.

Beyond Saddle Ridge

Foothills Parkway Update:

According to a [recent article](#) in the Knoxville News Sentinel, the last stretch of the Foothills Parkway has just received funding to complete the project by 2018. There's also an informative NPS brochure available online: [Completing Sections E and F of the Foothills Parkway](#), last updated March 2016.

On The Move...

Steven Blackburn & Cheryl Grenko purchased Perry and Patty Burchfield's home on Overlook View.

Lots were purchased by Mark Andrew Belluso, Jr. (Oakwood), Robin and Tammy Brendle (Waters End), and Susan R. Lane (Eagles Pass).

If Trees Could Talk...

Saddle Ridge recently lost one of its oldest trees: a butternut (white walnut) found on the creek bank in the barn area. A call went out for help cleaning it up. Hugh Pearson led more than 10 members of the community with chain saws, chipper, and lots of energy in getting logs and mulch from the tree.

As we cleaned up the tree, we wondered if it was one of the oldest trees in Saddle Ridge. Based on tree rings, Hugh estimated this butternut was 55-60 years old. Butternut trees are susceptible to canker disease and have an average life of 75 years. They are hard to find. Mike Hood, Tennessee Department of Forestry, noted that there are a few stands left in the area—one close to East Miller's Cove Road going right out of Saddle Ridge. Only a few stands of the butternut are found south of the Smokies; most are found north into New England and west just across the Mississippi River.

Hood also reported that Saddle Ridge land was most likely clearcut in the 1950s/60s by the Cameron Thrasher Orr Lumber Company (out of North Carolina). Lumbering stopped in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in the 1930s; however, many of the surrounding forests were not protected. Nancy Cain notes in her history of Saddle Ridge that J. T. Trotter and his wife sold the land to a group headed by Carl Waters in 1945. Jack and Juanita Davis purchased the land in 1964. (For details about the history of SR, see [The Ridge Rambler](#) Winter 2008, June 2009, Summer 2010, and Fall 2010.) We don't know for sure if Trotter or Waters leased the land to the lumber company for harvesting, but given the age of the trees in Saddle Ridge, they probably did.



Hugh and Judy Pearson and Scott Schehr cut long planks from the trunk of the fallen butternut. The planks will be turned into a picnic table for residents to sit where the tree once stood.

Condolences

Our condolences go out to Anna Janda upon the passing of her mother, Lorraine Janda, on July 18, 2016, and to the family of Marvin Burnette, who passed away on August 11, 2016.

If anyone has any information about the history, or photos of the land, prior to development of the Saddle Ridge community, send it to us (sodubois@gmail.com) and we'll share it in future issues.

The
Ridge Rambler

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July Wind and Rain

July storms brought much needed rain but high winds brought down some trees causing power outages. On Thursday, July 7, power was out from 7pm until 3am the next morning. Then on Friday, July 8, storms and high winds passed through again bringing down more trees, and power went out again from 7pm until 2pm Saturday. As always, Alcoa did a great job of restoring power to Saddle Ridge with the assistance of residents who quickly got to work cutting trees and clearing roads. We live in a great community where volunteers with chainsaws and grit don't need to be asked to get to work clearing roads and helping neighbors. Thank you Hugh and Judy Pearson, Darin Suggs, Jim Tedford, Lynn and Eddie Hopps, Scott Schehr, Ken and Cheri LaValley, Larry and Roxanne Clapp, and everyone else that helped with the cleanup.

Blount County Zoning Hearing

On Thursday, August 11, 2016, the Blount County Zoning Authority considered a request submitted by property owner, Perry Burchfield, for a Special Exception Change of Use from real estate office to party and meeting venue on his property at 1660 Saddle Ridge Road.

All property in Saddle Ridge, and the surrounding area, is zoned R-2 rural district. Customary home-based businesses are permitted but a family commercial enterprise requires a special exception. The original Special Exception on the property, for a non-conforming use as a real estate office, was grandfathered in when the zoning regulations were established in 2000. The Zoning Board determined that the original Special Exception for use as a real estate office was no longer valid because there was no evidence of any real estate business activity on the property in the past 30 months. Because the Special Exception was no longer applicable to the property, they denied the request for a Change of Use to venue.

On The Wild Side

Injured Hawk Returns to Saddle Ridge

by Scott Schehr



Broad-winged hawk after release.

On May 4, 2016, Saddle Ridge residents, Janet and Michael Kolarik, found an injured broad-winged hawk on their front deck. They realized it was injured, but it managed to fly into the woods near their home. They called Alex Wyss, who, with son Rowan, tracked the injured hawk in the woods and captured it. They brought the hawk to Scott and Theresa Schehr, who are volunteers at Upstate Birds of Prey, a non-profit organization that rescues, rehabilitates and releases injured and orphaned raptors. The next day the hawk was taken by the Schehrs and Natalie Mong, director of UBOP, to Countryside Veterinary Services in Louisville. There Natalie and veterinarian Cindy Backus gave the bird a comprehensive examination and x-rays, which determined that the bird had a fracture of the ulna bone of its left wing.

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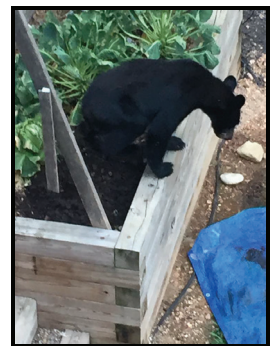
Early in the evening of May 30, 2016, after three weeks of recovery, Scott and Theresa brought the hawk back to Saddle Ridge for release. Diurnal (active during the day) species like broad-winged hawks are released just before dusk to allow them to fly into the trees and find a safe place to adjust to their surroundings in relative safety from predators. Whenever possible, raptors are released at or near the location they were rescued. Often a mature bird has a mate that remains in the area. The carrier was opened and the bird was allowed to come out at its own. After several minutes perched on the edge of the carrier, the hawk flew away into the trees. The release was a success!

[\(link to full article and more photos\)](#)

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Critter Activities

Bears on the move: It's that time of year when residents report an increase in bear sightings, like this bear in a garden photo posted on Facebook by Julie Ellison. Bears are very actively looking for food right now. Make sure they can't find food close to your house. Discourage them if they do get close. Get an air-horn or noise-making device so that if you see a bear around your house, you can



scare it off and help retrain it to not approach humans in their habitat. If you see a bear, keep a safe distance, but don't panic. Bears want to avoid you. For more tips see [Living with Bears in Saddle Ridge](#).

Bobcat: Ken LaValley takes some amazing photographs of wildlife, like this bobcat in his backyard. Bobcats have large home ranges, are

very secretive and seldom seen. They are more vocal during their breeding season from December into summer. You may have heard their high-pitched screams in the forest. They eat small mammals, such as squirrels, rabbits, and mice.



The Saddle Ridge Environment

by Sue DuBois

We all have our reasons for choosing Saddle Ridge as home, and most of those reasons have some connection to the

environment. Maybe it's the beauty of the surrounding mountains that brought you to Saddle Ridge, or the peace and quiet, or the forest with all its fascinating wildlife. Or maybe you just wanted the privacy and solitude provided by the woods. Whatever the reasons, chances are you could not find the same benefits in a less diverse, more sterile, more populated, or manicured environment. Life in Saddle Ridge is full of natural rewards.

All ecosystems, like forests and wetlands, are constantly changing, and every inhabitant has an impact. The same seasonal changes occur every year, like the wildflowers blooming in early Spring, the emergence of toads and snakes in late Spring, the increased activity of bears in late summer, and the colors of Fall. There are also changes in our natural surroundings that occur over longer periods of time. It's fascinating to read earlier issues of *The Ridge Rambler*, or talk to long-time residents about the changes they've witnessed over the years. Some trees are taller, others, such as the butternut or hemlock, are gone or disappearing. Aquatic vegetation covers more of the pond. Different plants and animals are observed in the wetlands, some good, some invasive. New wildflower species are discovered on the hillsides.

Because we live so closely and intimately with nature here in Saddle Ridge, and any changes can have significant impacts on the quality and value of our homes, it makes sense to do a good job of understanding, monitoring and protecting our natural assets. As a relative newcomer here (2 years in September), I see lots of evidence of the appreciation for Saddle Ridge's natural assets over the years. [Past issues of the Ridge Rambler](#) are full of information about the forests and the wildlife, and testaments to all the hard work by folks on the Beautification committee, the Wetlands Task Force, the Firewise Committee, not to mention all the volunteers that come out on Cleanup days. I'm so impressed by the wealth of information written about Saddle Ridge's natural assets and the community's commitment to protecting the environment.

Keep it up Saddle Ridge! The complete charter and responsibilities of the [Environment Committee](#) can be found on the SRPOA website, but in a nutshell, the Environment Committee is looking for volunteers who would like to continue the commitment by monitoring the community's natural resources, keeping property owners informed, beautifying common areas, and promoting environmentally-friendly living in Saddle Ridge. If you are interested, please contact me, Sue DuBois, sodubois@gmail.com.