

Spring 2017 Ridge Rambler • Saddle Ridge Property Owner's
Association Newsletter • Volume 24, Issue 1

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The
Ridge Rambler

SRPOA Annual Meeting

Saturday, July 15, 2017

The Annual Meeting will be held at the Walland Methodist Church located by the Walland Elementary School. Brunch is served at 9:30 am with the meeting following at 10:00 am. (Bring a covered dish!)

Community Matters



Thank you to all Saddle Ridge friends and neighbors for making this a great community!

Residents of Saddle Ridge have always come together and demonstrated an incredible amount of grit and giving when needed. We've had our share of fires, power outages, heavy rains, downed trees, and illnesses over this past year. And every time, as soon as word gets out that a road needs clearing, a tree cut out of the way, a generator started, a meal prepared, pets attended, or countless other examples, neighbors have jumped into action to lend a helping hand.

We would provide a list, but it's pretty much everyone in Saddle Ridge, so thanks to all!

Staying Informed During an Emergency

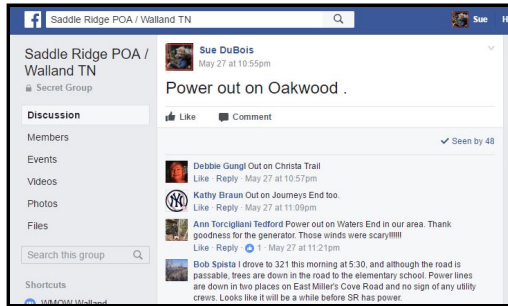


Photo: Saddle Ridge Facebook Group screenshot

The Saddle Ridge members [Facebook group page](#) continues to be a great source for information within our community. We regularly post messages, alerts, concerns, and needs to this page. Living in this rural community, we don't often see each other, especially during the winter months, so the Facebook page is a way to communicate timely news such as power outages, fire alerts, wildlife sightings, events coming up, lost pets, or even suspicious traffic.

Contact Communications Chair, Lynn Hopps, Lthopps@gmail.com, to be added to the group. Please remember, this page is strictly for people who own property in Saddle Ridge.

We are also developing a community phone tree for use during emergencies. More information will be provided at the SR Annual Meeting on July 15.

Aware and Prepared in Saddle Ridge



by Betsy Smith

The 2016 fires in Walland, Gatlinburg and Saddle Ridge on Waters End, increased the community's awareness of its vulnerability. The 1993 blizzard and flood, the 2012 severe windstorm and more recent derechos also illustrate the need to be prepared.

The SRPOA Environment Committee asked for volunteers to lead a review of fire and emergency preparation. The group is focusing on fire protection; however, much of the preparation applies to other emergencies. Four activities have been completed or are underway.

Activity One: Chief McClanahan and Captain Leatherwood from the Blount County Fire Protection District (BCFPD) welcomed an invitation to review the community's fire preparedness. On April 26, they met with Sue DuBois, Debra James, Margaret Saunders, and Smitty and Betsy Smith.

They were pleased to learn that Saddle Ridge is a "no burn" community.

The Chief suggested that we do the following:

- move leaves away from houses. The Chief pointed out that there were 280 structures at risk during the 2016 Walland fire—none were lost. The fire crews spent a significant amount of their time blowing leaves away from houses, cleaning gutters, and removing other debris. A minimum of 30 feet of defensible space around the house helps prevent the fire from spreading. Most fires in the area are brush fires where natural breaks such as roads, trails, and streams stop the fire.
- post the blue house number signs to identify the property. The signs are \$15 from the BCFPD.
- pay the annual \$120 service fee for fire protection.
- attend a **Firewise workshop** for Saddle Ridge residents **Friday, July 14 at 1 pm** (the day before the annual meeting).
- know your neighbors.
- check the Saddle Ridge Facebook page.

Activity Two: Chief McClanahan and Deputy Chief Phillips, BCFPD, drove every road in Saddle Ridge Wednesday, May 17, with the Smiths. The Chief now has a map of Saddle Ridge with the location of

structures. SR has 73 houses and approximately 22 miles of roads. They noted that the roads are in good condition and assured us that they are equipped to evacuate SR residents, if needed.

The Chief and Deputy Chief stressed communication. When calling in a fire, give as much information as possible. For example: Is it a brush fire or a structure fire? Will fire trucks have problems getting to the site (for example, a steep hill or turnaround issues)?

Activity Three: In 2007, SR began the process of becoming a Firewise community. The current group is researching the Firewise program and what SR needs to do to be recognized as Firewise. The Smiths attended the Firewise Conference held May 23 in Knoxville. They met members of communities designated as Firewise (Shagbark and FenceRail Gap, the two closest to SR, and Laurel Valley, in the process of becoming Firewise).

Firewise communities work with the TN Department of Forestry to mitigate the threat of fire. Grant money is available—but it will take some work on our part to meet Firewise requirements before we can apply. (Shagbark used funds to put in a text-alert system; FenceRail, to remove pine trees.)

A workshop lead by Wildfire Mitigation Specialist, Leon Konz, and East Tennessee Assistant District Forester, Nathan Waters, is the next step in learning about the Firewise program. The workshop is scheduled for Friday, July 14 at 1 pm (the day before the annual meeting). The location will be announced via email and Facebook. Plan to attend. They provided a link to an informative video for all residents to watch:

["Your Home Can Survive a Wildfire!"](#)

Activity Four: A emergency phone tree is in the planning stages thanks to Margaret Saunders. It will be introduced at the annual meeting and finalized by August 15. The phone tree is the fastest and most reliable way for us to communicate with residents in case of emergency. Every resident who elects to participate will receive a phone call or be told face-to-face about the emergency and if evacuation is needed. Facebook will remain a primary source of information for power outages and emergencies that do not warrant evacuation.

Board Announcements

Treasurer's Report

Annual assessment invoices for FY 2017/18 will arrive in June with a due date of July 31, 2017. The Board provides financial updates four times a year, including the annual report at the Annual Meeting to keep members better informed about the financial status of our Association. If you have any questions, please contact the Board at this address: saddleridgepoa@gmail.com.

Gate Access

If you are thinking about selling your property, please be sure your realtor knows that potential buyers should not come into Saddle Ridge to look around by themselves without an agent. We have over 22 miles of roads in Saddle Ridge which means it's easy for the those unfamiliar with our roads to get lost. For sale signs are not allowed inside SR, so it really does no good to allow people to drive through SR alone.

Trash Barn Etiquette

New to Saddle Ridge? Our guidelines for [Trash and Recycling Handling](#) can be found on the Saddle Ridge website at saddleridgepoa.com along with lots of other helpful information.

To all property owners, please remember to break down your cardboard boxes when you put them in the trash barn so there's room for everyone. The trash barn is closed every Monday until 10:30 AM for trash removal and cleaning.

Building or Remodelling?

Please remember that the detailed plans for any additions or remodelling work must be submitted to the SRPOA Architecture Committee for approval and can be emailed to saddleridgepoa@gmail.com. The architectural review and approval guidelines can be found on the Saddle Ridge web site, under Welcome Residents; then click on [Before You Build](#).

Saddle Ridge Community Firewise Workshop Friday, July 14, 2017 - 1 PM (location to be announced)

Wildfire Mitigation Specialist, Leon Konz, and East Tennessee Assistant District Forester, Nathan Waters, will be leading a Firewise workshop for Saddle Ridge property owners on Friday, July 14 at 1 pm. Konz recommends that everyone watch the Jack Cohen video called ["Your Home Can Survive a Wildfire!"](#) before the meeting. It can be found on Youtube.

The agenda for the workshop includes:

1. The Fire Adapted Communities concept.
2. What Firewise is.
3. Steps to become a nationally recognized Firewise community.
4. The TDF Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.
5. Any other topic that folks want to talk about.

Spring Recap



Photo: Spring Cleanup

Spring Cleanup

Many thanks to everyone that came out on Saturday, March 25 for the Saddle Ridge-East Millers Cove Road Spring Cleanup and to those who put in some time earlier in the week.

Our trash haul totaled 660 lbs, 32 bags of trash, 6 tires, 1 toilet (yes, a toilet in Reed Creek!), and 2 computer monitors (also in the creek). We also

cleaned up limbs and fallen trees around the barn area and washed the outside of the trash barn.

Keep Blount Beautiful provides the safety vests, bags, and litter pickers, and tipping fee at the landfill and we report back to them about our cleanup efforts.

Thanks for keeping Saddle Ridge and Blount County Beautiful!



Photo: Ladies Potluck

Ladies Potluck

Delicious food and great conversation at the Annual Saddle Ridge Ladies Potluck on February 7, hosted by Lynn Hopps and the Events/Hospitality Committee.

A Walk in the Woods

by Betsy Smith

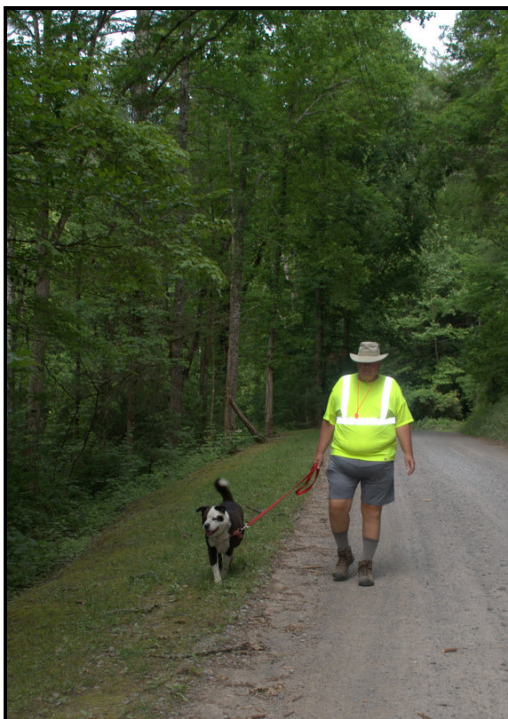


Photo: Smitty and Max enjoying a walk in the woods.

From time to time suggestions have been made by property owners that Saddle Ridge needs walking trails. But, indeed we already have about 22 miles of trails -- our roads!

The roads offer many advantages over walking trails. They are well-maintained and wide enough for you, your friends, and dogs to walk side-by-side. You don't have to worry about poison-ivy if you walk on the gravel roads while observing lots of beautiful wildflowers and wildlife along the roadside. It's very safe! Be aware of your surroundings. Bears and snakes will generally get well out of the way before you see them. Besides they are much easier to spot from the road.

You will see very few cars. If you do, wave and smile; it's most likely a neighbor. You probably won't get lost walking the roads, since neighbors are always nearby, but to be on the safe side, take a [map](#), water, and a whistle, if you are going for a long walk.

And the benefit to walking the roads of Saddle Ridge: lots of studies have shown that a walk in the woods is good for both your mental and physical health.

Here are four possible walks, but the options are almost unlimited. Two loops around Saddle Ridge can start at the barn. Pick your direction depending on when you want to climb hills.

- Barn – Chilhowee Loop – Oakwood – Eagle Pass – Elks Point – Chilhowee Loop – Barn (approx. 5 miles)
- Barn – Chilhowee Loop – Bear Paw – Walnut Flats – Grouse Top – Waters End – Chilhowee Loop – Barn (approx. 3 miles)
- Barn to the gate and back is about a mile. This is flattest walk in Saddle Ridge, and depending on the time of day, free of cars. Birds, frogs, lots of different trees, a great view of the wetlands and much more make this a relaxing, easy walk.
- Or, if you don't want to see anyone—go to the intersection of Elks Point and Eagle Pass and walk to the end of Eagle Pass (about a mile). It's a gradual downhill to the end so an uphill climb coming back.

Walking the roads of Saddle Ridge is a great way to stay fit, meet your neighbors, and get closer to nature. We are fortunate to live in one of the most beautiful regions of the country—enjoy it!

(Search the internet for [shinrin-yoku - "forest bathing" benefits](#) - one of many interesting articles about the benefits of a walk in the woods)

On the Wild Side



Bears on the Move

Photo: Bears by Roxanne Clapp

For those new to the neighborhood, this time of year more bears are passing through and actively looking for food. Here's some tips for living with bears:

<http://www.saddleridgepoa.com/living-with-bears.html>

It's a good reminder that we all need to check porches and around the house and remove anything that might attract a bear or raccoon or other wildlife like grills, pet food, bird food, garbage, or recyclables.

And definitely, everyone - **Do not feed the bears!**

Critters and Your Car

by Roxanne Clapp

Small rodents love your vehicle! And they can live through some surprisingly extreme conditions.

One day our windshield wiper fluid wouldn't squirt. A short investigation revealed a cut line. Well, not really a "cut" line, rather an "eaten" line. In addition, the acorn stash we found under the hood of the truck was impressive, but the unknown culprit, not-so-affectionately named Amelia, wasn't satisfied with just hoarded acorns. No, she ate all sorts of plastic goodies under the hood: the insulation on top of the hood, the boot that surrounds the steering column, the battery charger covers, multiple wire casings, and more. After a visit to the dealership and a hefty bill we learned this is becoming quite a common occurrence. Some manufacturers use soy-based plastics in vehicles, and apparently critters love the stuff.

We didn't realize, at first, that we were dealing with such a crafty critter. We thought one had crawled up in the car and chewed a bunch of stuff and went on her way. But no. It all started here in Tennessee, but we didn't discover the empty windshield wiper fluid tank until we were in Florida. We refilled the tank thinking it had been overlooked when last serviced. When it still didn't work on our drive back to Tennessee, we became convinced we had sprung a leak in the tank. Nope. That's when our previously mentioned investigation took place, so off to the dealership we went.

It didn't take us long to realize whatever had been dining on our truck was still doing it! So, we tried the cayenne pepper spray trick that the dealership told us about. I think that only made the wee thing mad because we started finding droppings in the truck bed. Somehow she was managing to get in there even though we have a cover on the bed. With several dousings of pepper spray, we were off to Florida smelling like a Mexican dinner and feeling pretty good that we were leaving this critter behind.

That, however, was just the beginning. Soon after our arrival in Florida, we found a huge stash of large Tennessee-sized acorns on the driveway under the truck. The hunt was on. We sprayed the truck some more. It did help, but this determined little \$#^& found other parts to chew on and kept leaving us tiny gifts in the truck bed.

Surely, she didn't travel all the way from Tennessee with us, did she?! But wait, she must have traveled

with us on a previous visit because of the type of acorns we found and when the windshield wipers first stopped working. Holy cow! We have a traveling squirrel! We tried to shake the critter several different ways. High speed interstate travel didn't bother this crafty little son-of... have you ever seen "On Golden Pond?" I felt like Norman Thayer!

We placed peppermint essential oil soaked cotton balls under the hood and in the truck bed. Now we smelled like a candy cane! That didn't seem to do any good. Maybe we didn't use enough. We moved on to rodent traps but she was too slick for those. Baits gone, traps tripped, no sign of any critter.

Another trip to Tennessee, to Florida, and back to Tennessee again.... moth balls, rodent repellent balsam fir chips, more cayenne and peppermint. Did you know if you spray concentrated cayenne pepper solution under your hood that your eyes will burn when you ride in the truck? Peppermint soaked cotton balls make a nice air freshener though. :) Google said squirrels are afraid of people and will scurry away from human voices so we tried talking to it and banging on the truck. We heard it running along the underside of the truck but we never did see her come out. Played the radio, more stinky stuff - used cat litter - we felt like we tried EVERYTHING and this went on for months. So, we named her Amelia, after Amelia Earhart, in hopes that one day she too would mysteriously vanish without a trace. And she almost did. She did leave a little trace, a smell of burning hair one evening on our drive home from an evening out with friends made us believe she finally ate something that was going to set the truck on fire. But, it was her.

We park in the garage now.

Treating Hemlocks and Ash Trees

by Alex Wyss

THE SURGE IN DEAD TREES IN SADDLE RIDGE HAS IMPLICATIONS FOR HOMEOWNERS

If you've noticed an unusually high number of dead or dying trees, you're not mistaken. There is a sudden increase in tree mortality in Saddle Ridge and this bump in dead trees may pose a risk to your home and property.

Most of these dead trees are white ash; an invasive beetle is the culprit. Emerald ash borer (EAB), attacks only ash trees. It is believed to have been introduced into Michigan 15 to 20 years ago on wood packing material from Asia. EAB was first reported in Tennessee from a truck stop in Knoxville in 2010



and has rapidly spread into most of Tennessee. The beetles typically kill an ash tree within three years of the initial infestation. The larvae feed on the inner bark of ash trees, disrupting the tree's ability to transport water and nutrients. When they emerge as adults, they leave D-shaped holes in the bark about one-eighth inch wide.

Photo: A typical identifying feature of white ash trees is the diamond shaped pattern on the bark.

What can you do? Ash can be treated with pesticide to protect the tree depending on the health of the tree; however, treatment will likely require applications over the long term. Dead ash trees tend to break and fall sooner after death than most tree species so homeowners should strongly consider removing ash within striking distance of their home or property. If you've got ash that you want to treat or remove, the best course of action is to seek the services of a certified arborist.

Lastly, let's not move the problem elsewhere by transporting ash or any other firewood long distances. Movement of infected firewood is the most common means of moving EAB and most other tree pests long distances. If you're going camping, buy fire wood locally at your destination or purchase USDA certified, heat-treated firewood which is sold at most grocery stores.

Beyond Saddle Ridge



Foothills Parkway Update

Photo: Senator Lamar Alexander addressing a group at the Foothills Parkway [groundbreaking ceremony](#) on April 20, 2017.

Paving of the final 'missing link' section of the Foothills Parkway began this Spring and is scheduled for completion in 2018. The section runs from Walland to Wears Valley.

Upcoming Events

Firewise Community Meeting
Friday, July 14, 2017 at 1 PM

Saddle Ridge POA Annual Meeting
Saturday, July 15, 2017

As Seen in Saddle Ridge



Top: Canadian Goose at the lake; Bottom Left: Tom in displaying for a hen; Bottom Right: Bobcat blending in to the tree. Images by Lisa and Keith Shuster





Images of Spring in Saddle Ridge: The lake; Hosta in bloom near the gate; Redbud and pretty yellow flowers at the gate; stunned tired on the deck; Spring's first bloom on Overlook View Road. Photos by Roxanne Clapp



Top: Smoky Mountain morning; Bottom Left: Blanket Flower (*Gaillardia*); Bottom Right: Iris at the pond. Images by Lisa and Keith Shuster

Contact your

Get Involved

SRPOA Board:

Email: saddleridgepoa@gmail.com

Board members and committee chairs are listed below and also on the [Saddle Ridge website](#) - www.saddleridgepoa.com

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

Join one of our Saddle Ridge POA committees and contribute to the community. There are 5 standing committees: Architecture, Communications, Environment, Events/Hospitality, and Road.

Check out the [Charter](#) for each of the 5 SRPOA standing committees or contact the Committee Chair:

Architecture - Darin Suggs
Road - Darin Suggs
Communications - Lynn Hopps
Environment - Sue DuBois
Events/Hospitality - Ann Tedford

[Saddle Ridge's Facebook](#) page is a great place to read and share up-to-the-minute news of the community. If you are not already a member, contact Lynn Hopps, lhoppes@gmail.com, to join the private Facebook group.



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