


The Ridge Rambler

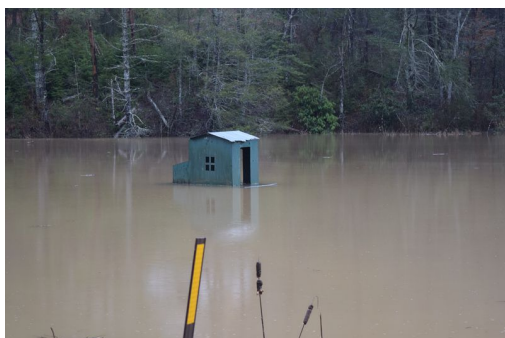
Wet Winter



Seems like winter just flew by. Maybe because the daffodils were popping up in January and we really didn't have much of a winter. There was a light dusting of snow in December and maybe an inch in late January, then the cold gave way to a very rainy February.

Thirteen inches of rain in February (the normal is 4.23") caused flooding and road erosion in and around Blount County and in Saddle Ridge. Waters End was closed down by the pond for repairs after heavy rains on February 23 and 24 caused significant erosion under the road through an old drain. Rain was so intense that water was flowing over the dam. Luckily, in part because much of the water was dispersed in the wetlands, we avoided major flooding of the gate area. East Millers Cove Road was impassable in a few places and water flowed over Saddle Ridge Road.

In addition, Saddle Ridge Road was closed for about 4 hours in the evening of February 25 so Alcoa Utilities could replace a pole that had snapped due to a fallen branch and restore power. The Canada geese returned to the pond in mid-February. Hummingbirds have been sighted a month earlier than usual. The chorus of frogs and toads in the wetlands is on after dark. Can we assume an early Spring?





Firewise Day / Spring Cleanup

Saturday, April 27 is Saddle Ridge Community Clean-up and Firewise Day. We'll be out picking up litter along East Millers Cover Road, cleaning the barn area, conducting Firewise home inspections, cleaning flower beds, and more.

Firewise Certificate

We earned our 2018 [Firewise certificate!](#) Thank you to all in the community who volunteered at clean up days and also reported fire mitigation activities around their home (one volunteer hour equals \$24.14/home). Our total investment in volunteer hours was equal to \$53,622.48 (or \$734.55/home)—far exceeding what is required.

Reporting Volunteer Hours and Expenses

The link to the survey covering your January/February Firewise activities was emailed March 1. You can also follow the [link to survey](#) to report the time and money spent to improve your home's defensible space.

If you need help, let [Betsy Smith](#) know. We will have a team with equipment ready to help at the next Saddle Ridge Community Clean-up and Firewise Day Saturday, April 27. If you have not had a home assessment, Firewise Day Saturday, April 27, is a good time.

Firewise Grant Money Purchases



Saddle Ridge now has a chipper purchased with Firewise grant money. We are learning how to run it and developing a plan for community use. We will have it running on Firewise Day, Saturday, April 27.

If you want to borrow other equipment purchased with Firewise funds just let [Betsy Smith](#) know. Firewise grant money also helped Saddle Ridge purchase a backpack leaf blower, long pole tree trimmer, weed trimmer, and more. You can borrow the equipment to use on your property.



Saddle Ridge Trash Barn

Due to an increase in residents, we have an increase in trash! The board is looking into the purchase of a larger trash barn to accommodate the need for more space for trash and recycling. We'll recycle the current barn into a storage shed for some of our new equipment.

Please continue to follow our trash guidelines:

- Break down cardboard boxes.
- No trash in the recycling bins ([check the list of appropriate items](#)).
- The barn is closed from 7 am to 2 pm on Monday for emptying and cleaning.

Annual Ladies Cabin Fever Potluck

We had a wonderful time eating, feasting, and sharing stories at the Annual Potluck on Tuesday, February 26. Many thanks to Connie Evans and the Events Committee for organizing the event and to Lynn Hopps for hosting us at her house again this year.



Beyond Saddle Ridge



During the months of January and February, Tuckaleechee Utilities installed water pipes along East Millers Cove Road from Walland Center to the Forestry Station. Blackberry Mountain opened to its first guests on February 15.

In January, several Saddle Ridge property owners attended a Blount County Planning Commission hearing on a request by Blackberry and several Walland Center businesses to rezone from 22 acres from rural to commercial. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the request.

Saddle Ridge and Blackberry Farms support Walland Elementary

by Judy Pearson

On July 7, 2018, Blackberry Farms held a public meeting to present their plans for rezoning. At that meeting, I met President Brad Alexander and asked him about their chart displaying all of their community donations to the surrounding area and Blount County. I shared the kind of things and how much monies Saddle Ridge has donated to Walland Elementary over the last 12 years (about \$60,000 worth). I then stated I hoped Blackberry Farms would consider the school a neighbor and worthy of their support directly.

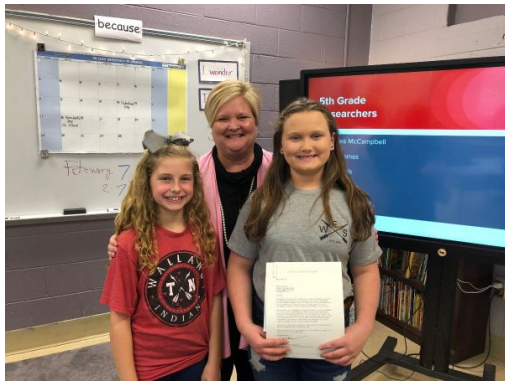
In the Fall of 2018, the school decided to approach Blackberry Farms for help to provide a gazebo style outdoor classroom, costing about \$20,000. The 5th-grade students, Steve Davis, Andrew Loper and Taleah Schacherle, along with Avery Thomas and Mercedes McCampbell researched options and cost for the shape, kind of wood, type of flooring and roof. Then on Feb. 6, 2019 Avery and Mercedes presented the team's project and its benefits to Blackberry Farms president Matt Alexander and Sarah Chabot, Director of Marketing, along with Principal Kim Sullivan, teachers and parents. Mrs. Sullivan asked for comments or questions, there were none.

Mrs. Sullivan informed those present that these 5th-grade students wouldn't get to use the classroom since by completion they will be at Heritage Middle in the 6th grade. They volunteered to do the research and presentation for the school and the students who follow them which includes some brothers and sisters.

Mr. Alexander rose and complimented the students on their presentation. He gave Mercedes and Avery an envelope containing the approval for a grant of \$20,000 to fund the classroom. He also gave the girls a big additional surprise. In the fall of 2019, Blackberry Farms will provide the funding for every 5th grader to go to Tremont Environmental Camp. This amount is roughly \$300 per student with 3 classes of about 20 students eligible to go this fall.

Why should this donation be important to us? Saddle Ridge property owners hearts and pockets have been touched by teachers and students at Walland. For the last twelve years, we have provided movie screens, whiteboards, dictionaries, books with CD's, CD players, earphones for almost the entire student population, paper, pencils, erasers, chart and poster paper, calculators, binders and on and on. Some of us have also volunteered at the school. In other words, we have set the example for caring and giving. And over the years I have heard people in the area say "We've heard what you all are doing for Walland Elementary". The people of Saddle Ridge need to know how much the teachers appreciate what you have done! Way to go Saddle Ridge property owners. I'm proud to be a part of this community!

The students pictured below are Avery Thomas and Mercedes McCampbell. Matt Alexander is the representative from Blackberry Farm. There is also a photo of our principal (Kim Sullivan) with Avery and Mercedes. Avery and Mercedes are 5th graders. They (along with 3 other students) created a slideshow for the people from Blackberry Farm outlining what we are hoping to do as far as creating an outdoor classroom at Walland Elementary School.



Welcome to Saddle Ridge

New property owners:

Sally Whelan and Tom Fenwick - 2198 Oakwood Road
Allison Fay and Mark Stevenson - 2006 Chilhowee Loop
Colleen Woodward - Chilhowee Loop
Rita and Marvin Sledge - 2225 Chilhowee Loop
Hidden Oaks Farm, Inc. - Gobbler Ridge

The Wild Side of Saddle Ridge

Spring is just around the corner and that means the bears and other wildlife will be a lot more active and hungry! Make sure your house and property are [Bearwise!](#)

- Never Feed or Approach Bears
- Secure Food, Garbage, and Recycling
- Remove Bird Feeders When Bears Are Active
- Never Leave Pet Food Outdoors
- Clean & Store Grills
- Alert Neighbors to Bear Activity

Be kind to our reptile and amphibian friends. Drive slowly and watch for wildlife.

Speaking of wild - can you spot the troll on Chilhowee Mountain?



SR Facebook Group

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 Sue DuBois sodubois@gmail.com, to be added to the group. Please remember, this page is strictly for people who own property in Saddle Ridge.

Contact your 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: Janet Kolarik - 865-805-0348
Treasurer: Smitty (G. Robert Smith, Jr.) - 615-631-5836
Secretary: Judy Pearson - 865-982-5729

Board Members:

Alane Wyss - 865-977-1533
Connie Evans - 865-304-2267
Sue DuBois - 865-307-2532
Tom Braun - 225-281-3889
Ken LaValley - 865-970-6410

Get Involved

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

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

Architecture - Ken LaValley
Road - Tom Braun
Communications - Sue DuBois
Environment - Alane Wyss
Events/Hospitality - Connie Evans

[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 Sue DuBois, sodubois@gmail.com, to join the private Facebook group.



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Send information and photos for future Ridge Ramblers to sodubois@gmail.com



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