



Blackberry Juice

ANNUAL MEETING FEBRUARY 2008

BLACKBERRY MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jack Wheeler, President

David Galusha, Vice President

Bill Henning, Treasurer

Sara Lee, Secretary

Dave Teffeteller, Member at Large

DESIGN COMMITTEE

Barbara Dunson

Barbara Ellis

Norman Essner

Maxine Morris

Dave Teffeteller

CCR/BYLAWS COMMITTEE

Rich Baker

Norman Essner

Sara Lee

Maxine Morris

Dave Teffeteller



Financial Report Bill Henning, Treasurer

At last year's annual meeting your directors reported that 2007 was expected to be rather uneventful financially, with no larger projects planned requiring large capital expenditures such as road paving or well drilling. The year was planned to be one for increasing our cash reserves. However, due to the drought, the association was forced to dig a new well, but even aside from this unanticipated project, the year proceeded as planned and the association's reserves were increased by \$34,453. At year-end the operating account was bare, but total cash reserves were \$143,863 of which \$83,651 was invested in bank certificates.

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This year's budget calls for a much needed restoration and maintenance program of the association's pond and water drainage system at a projected cost of \$21,000. The drought-induced low water levels make this project economically feasible at this time.

Wells, roads, bridge, buildings and gates are generally in good condition and should not require any major expenditures this year.

However, Mother Nature sometimes creates some unexpected surprises.

Through the years we have learned the value of adequate reserves. Unlike so many other homeowners associations, ours has been able to avoid special assessments over the last decade, and that is an achievement of which we should be proud.

None of us likes increases in our assessments and certainly not the burden of special assessments. For the past few years the association's members have voted to apply the federal cost of living adjustment (COLA) to our assessments to offset the effects of inflation. This method has allowed us to maintain our budgetary standards through small annual increases rather than eventual, large increases and special assessments. In an inflationary environment individuals and associations are affected in the same ways. The only choice is how we wish to pay for these increases – small regular increments or large unanticipated assessments. Your directors recommend the present method of annual COLA increases.

Financially, the future looks good for our beautiful Blackberry Mountain.



Blackberry's Membership Reaches 140

Since 2004, Blackberry Mountain has 50 new property owners, 5 of these are owners of newly constructed homes, and the others are new owners of existing homes.

Welcome 2007's New Members

Terry Wilson LL07
 Chester Chaffin LL52
 Ed & Judy Sanders BF22
 Robert Mahar LL51
 David O'Donnell HM16
 David & Martha Jackson NP07
 Charles & Janine Hardy BF37
 Darrell & Joyce Hipes BF50
 Terry Weaver & Patricia Nestor SS15B
 Melissa Schoene SL16



Water Conservation

Drought related dry wells and springs indicate that our water supply is finite. We all should do what we can to conserve.]

- 1. Check your toilets for leaks.** Put a little food coloring in your toilet tank. If, without flushing, the color begins to appear in the bowl within 30 minutes, you have a leak that should be repaired immediately. Most replacement parts are inexpensive and easy to install.
- 2. Don't use the toilet as a wastebasket.** Every time you flush a cigarette butt, facial tissue or other small bit of trash, five to seven gallons of water are wasted.
- 3. Put plastic bottles in your toilet tank.** To cut down on water waste, put an inch or two of sand or pebbles inside each of two plastic bottles to weigh them down. Fill the bottles with water, screw the lids on, and put them in your toilet tank, safely away from the operating mechanisms. This may save ten or more gallons of water per day. Be sure at least 3 gallons of water remain



- in the tank so it will flush properly. For new installations, consider buying "low flush" toilets, which use 1 to 2 gallons per flush instead of the usual 3 to 5 gallons.
- 4. Insulate your water pipes.** It's easy and inexpensive to insulate your water pipes with pre-slit foam pipe insulation. You'll get hot water faster plus avoid wasting water while it heats up.
- 5. Install water-saving shower heads and low-flow faucet aerators.** Inexpensive water-saving shower heads or restrictors are easy for the homeowner to install. Also, long, hot showers can use five to ten gallons every

unnecessary minute. Limit your showers to the time it takes to soap up, wash down and rinse off. Also, all household faucets should be fit with aerators. This single best home water conservation method is also the cheapest!

- 6. Check faucets and pipes for leaks.** A small drip from a worn faucet washer can waste 20 gallons of water per day. Larger leaks can waste hundreds of gallons.
- 7. Take shorter showers.** A 10 minute shower uses approximately 80 gallons of water.
- 8. Use your dishwasher and clothes washer for only full loads.** Automatic dishwashers and clothes washers should be fully loaded for optimum water conservation. With clothes washers, avoid the permanent press cycle, which uses an added 5 gallons for the extra rinse. For partial loads, adjust water levels to match the size of the load.

Ponds

In addition to being beautiful amenities of Blackberry, our ponds are an integral part of our hydrology and drainage system. Blackberry has seven ponds, one in High Meadow and six within the gates. McGraw Pond (on Blackberry Mountain Road near the covered



bridge) is privately owned and drains a large area from Blackberry Falls Drive and Pheasant Run Lane into the Cartecay River at the bridge. Peace, Harmony, Nash and Upper and Lower Spring Lakes drain the remainder of Blackberry's watershed into the Cartecay below Lower Spring Lake. Except for Nash Pond, all of Blackberry's lakes are primarily spring fed and average 15 to 20 feet deep at their deepest points. Peace and Upper Spring Lake are retention ponds designed to prevent silt from entering the Cartecay.

The ongoing drought has hit some of our ponds very hard. The springs that feeds Peace Lake are essentially dry (a well in that area has gone dry as well). Nash Pond which only receives water from rain and runoff is also experiencing very low levels.

Early this year, we will take advantage of the low water level to dredge the silt from Peace Pond. Since this pond is a tributary of the Cartecay River, there are EPD and county stipulations and regulations governing this project. The silt in the pond must be dried, removed and spread to the landscape

above the pond in a way to reduce future runoff. The mechanical components of the dam will also be replaced. The cooperation of the adjoining property owners will be necessary for access to the pond and for distribution of the silt.

Also, planned for this year is the commencement of a restoration program for the other ponds. This work will be begin in the spring. More information regarding the pond restoration projects will be published in the next newsletter.

Signs

In 2007 Blackberry's most of Blackberry's road identification signs were replaced. This year the sign replacement project will continue with new signs at the entrances and common areas. In coordination with Rivers Edge, the existing sign clutter at the Mulkey Road entrance will be removed and replaced with a single sign.



2007 Picnic!

The 2007 Annual Picnic was a huge success - good weather, good food, good music and good company. Mark your calendar now for this year's picnic on Saturday, October 4th.



CCR AMENDMENTS

The CCR and Bylaws Committee will continue its review of the Blackberry Mountain Association's Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions this year. BMA's legal counsel will also review the document to ensure its compliance with applicable Georgia statutes. Recommended revisions will be presented prior to next year's annual meeting.

BMA wells will be chlorinated the week of April 14.
Notification of the exact time will be sent later.

Animal Control

The Gilmer County commissioners have turned the responsibility of animal control over to the Gilmer County sheriff's department. Remember, the Blackberry Mountain Association does not provide animal control.

So, if you have a problem with a dog-at-large or a vicious dog on your property, call the Gilmer County Sheriff's Department Animal Control Office at 706 635-4625.

A downloadable copy of the Gilmer County Animal Control Ordinance is available on our website.

Have You Used Your Website?

Blackberry Mountain Association's website is a great resource for our members. On the website you can:

- check for upcoming events and meetings
- download the membership book which contains maps, bylaws and CCRs
- download design committee rules, forms and applications
- download current and past issues of the *Blackberry Juice*.



Pay your website a visit at:

www.BlackberryMountainAssociation.com