



# Blackberry Juice

NOVEMBER 2025

## BLACKBERRY MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION

### OFFICE MANAGER

Jeannie Miller

### PHONE

706 273.3100

After Hours Water and  
Gate Systems Emergencies Only  
(leave name, phone # and brief message)

### MAILING ADDRESS

Blackberry Mountain Association  
25 Blackberry Mountain Drive # 8101  
Ellijay, GA 30536

### EMAIL

blackberry@ellijay.com

### WEBSITE

www.BlackberryMountainAssociation.com

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

David Galusha, President  
Dave Teffeteller, Vice President  
Doug Colburn, Secretary  
Rich Baker, Treasurer  
Rebekah Montgomery, Member at Large

### DESIGN COMMITTEE

Barbara Dunson  
Jennifer Fontenot  
Dave Teffeteller



## Annual Meeting - December 6th

Please take a moment to mark your calendar for Saturday, December 6, Blackberry Mountain Association's annual meeting. The meeting will be held at Victory Christian Center at 208 Victory Circle (off Maddox Drive). The doors will open at 9:00 am and the meeting will begin at 9:30 am.

**RSVPs are required. Email or call the office if you plan to attend.**

### 2026 Budget

Even with rising inflation Blackberry Mountain Association, continues to be fiscally sound with a well-funded reserve fund. BMA uses the Social Security Administration's annual COLA (2.8%) as a guideline for considering the impact of inflation in creating the budget. The Board of Directors is proposing an increase of approximately 2.5%.

### Gates, Roads and Bridge

A portion of Blackberry Mountain Drive beginning outside the Timber Falls Trail gate was milled and paved this year.

As part of the ongoing maintenance of Blackberry's roads, repairs and right of way maintenance will take place throughout the year. The bridge, Blackberry Mountain Drive and Timber Falls Trail gates will also require periodic repairs and maintenance. Please use extra

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### PLEASE READ

Included with this newsletter you will find the proposed budget for FY2026 and your proxy. If you are unable to attend the meeting, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT that you take the time to assign your proxy to a property owner who will be attending or to Doug Colburn, the Association Secretary.

This is a general proxy and gives the holder the authority to cast votes on your behalf on any matter that requires a vote at the meeting. THE PROXY MUST BE RETURNED BY 2 PM, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5.

This year's annual meeting will be held on Saturday, December 6, 2025, at 9:30 am at Victory Christian Center at 208 Victory Circle (off Maddox Drive).

**IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND, RSVP BY CALLING OR EMAILING THE OFFICE.**



It is my avowed purpose to see the community grow slowly with much love and care. I want to make log cabin ownership available to the young, the middle-aged and the senior citizens. I want the sensitive, ecologically-concerned who drive ten year old Volkswagens to live in residential harmony with jet-traveling neighbors. I feel that the common bond is the log cabin and a oneness with nature.

*From 1981, Gilbert Dickey, Blackberry's original developer. The next issue of this newsletter will feature the story of Blackberry Mountain's founding 45 years ago.*

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caution when the work crews are present. When possible, email and website notification will be given in advance of these repairs.

### Wells

Maintaining Blackberry's wells, pumps, water lines, storage tanks, chlorinators and structures continues to be a major Association expense. If you see what appears to be a water leak along the roadway, please notify the office at once.

**Please conserve water.** Limit the filling of hot tubs, outside watering and pressure washing.

### Ponds

The BMA ponds are maintained professionally throughout the year. The tops of the dams are cleared regularly as part of the common area maintenance. The faces of the dams are maintained annually in accordance with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Environmental Protection Division regulations.

### Fishing

Fishing on Blackberry ponds by non-residents and unaccompanied guests is strictly monitored. To make enforcement easier, please obtain fishing permits for you and your guests at the office.

### Parking

Please remember that any vehicle parked at the office/mailbox area without a Blackberry windshield sticker or guest pass is subject to being towed. Please observe all NO PARKING signs and do not block any roadway. **On-street parking is not allowed** anywhere in Blackberry.

### Speed Limits

For many of us, crossing the bridge into Blackberry has a calming and stress-reducing effect. Ideally, this effect causes a reduction in vehicle speed as well. For your safety as well as that of other drivers, chil-

dren, walkers, runners and workers, **SLOW DOWN** and observe the speed limits.

### Rules

From time to time, owners question, challenge or ignore some of the rules of the Association. These rules are time-tested and are essential for Blackberry's continuation as one of the most desirable communities in north Georgia.

The use of recreational vehicles and motorcycles, outdoor fireplaces/burning, use of fireworks and feeding wildlife are all regulated by Association rules. Violators of Association rules are subject to fines.

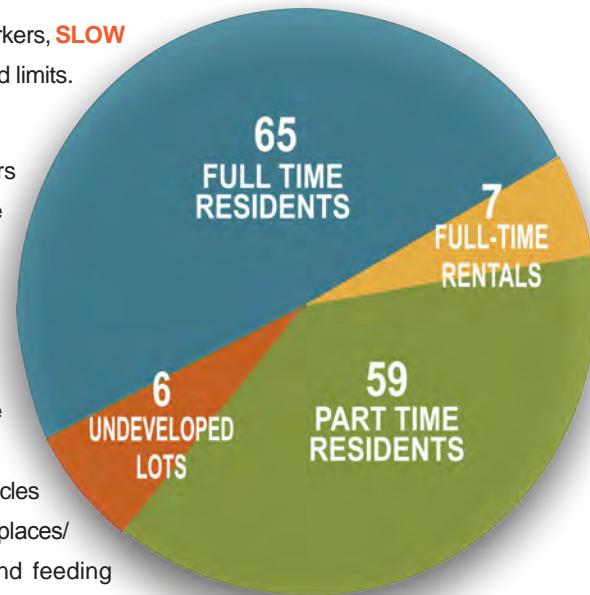
The cutting of trees, paving of driveways, replacing of roofs, adding of structures, fences and decks are all governed by the Design Committee rules. It is incumbent on all property owners to be aware of these rules and to submit the appropriate applications for approval. **The Design Committee is also available for consultation and advice regarding landscaping, plantings and drainage issues. Don't hesitate to ask.**

### Past Due Assessments

When property owners' water services are interrupted due to non-payment of assessments, the owners will be charged the disconnection/reconnection charges incurred by the Association. The use of Blackberry's common areas is reserved for members in good standing only.

### Rental Property

Only long-term rentals are allowed in Blackberry. Owners of long-term rental properties are responsible for notifying the Association office with contact information for all of their tenants. The Renter Information forms are available on the BMA website and at the office.



It is also the responsibility of the owners of rental properties to make their tenants aware of the Association rules and restrictions. Property owners are responsible and liable for the acts of their tenants. The Association has the authority to evict any rental tenants for violations.

### Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

Blackberry's hemlocks have been treated against the invasive Hemlock Woolly Adelgid.

During the spring and summer, you may occasionally find evidence of the adelgids on some of your hemlocks. Also, some of our hemlocks, particularly those in dense stands along the river, have suffered from fungal infections and blights.

If you have any questions or concerns about the health of your hemlocks, please contact the office.

### Animal Control

Remember, the Blackberry Mountain Association does not provide animal control. So, if you have a problem with a dog-at-large, a vicious dog on your property, or a dog disturbing the peace, call the Gilmer County Sheriff's Department Animal Control Office at 706 635-8911.

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**Wildlife**

The deer over-population continues to be a major problem in Blackberry. **DO**

**NOT FEED THE DEER!** For wildlife related problems, contact the Department of Natural Resources at 706 635-5060.

**Hunting and the use of all weapons is strictly prohibited.**

**Visitors, Guests & Workers**

Due to the ever-increasing unauthorized attempts at entering Blackberry gates, residents' codes will only be issued for temporary use by workers. All other codes are being disabled.

If you are expecting weekend guests or visitors to your home. Remind them to use the keypads located at the office and service gates, or meet them at one of the entrances.

Also, please remember that the office gate and bridge are not for use by service, repair and construction vehicles. **Drivers of those vehicles must use the Timber Falls Trail service gate.** Maps and directions to that gate are available in your property owners' manual, at the office and on the Blackberry website.

**Firewise**

Blackberry Mountain Association is an active Firewise Community. In May, the association conducted a clean-up and roadside chipping. Seventy of our residents participated. BMA received a Firewise grant of \$3,500 offsetting the cost of the project.

Chipping will be conducted in 2026 as well. **Until the chipping date is announced do not place any limbs, branches and debris along the roadways. Violators will be subject to fines and responsible for the cost of removal.**

**FY 2026 Proposed Budget**

Below is the 2026 fiscal year proposed budget. The budget includes an assessment dues increase of approximately 2.5%.

	2025 PROPOSED	2025 ACTUAL <sup>1</sup>	2026 PROPOSED
<b>INCOME</b>			
Reserve Assessments	\$42,569	\$42,409	\$43,633
Regular Assessments	150,927	150,360	154,700
Assessment - Other	0	0	0
<b>Total Assessments</b>	<b>193,496</b>	<b>192,769</b>	<b>198,333</b>
Interest Income	4,212	6,254	4,600
Miscellaneous <sup>2</sup>	600	8,954	600
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>198,308</b>	<b>207,977</b>	<b>203,903</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Bad Debt Allowance	0	0	0
Insurance	8,500	8,576	8,500
Miscellaneous <sup>3</sup>	800	636	700
Office Expenses & Supplies	1,800	2,500	1,000
Professional Services	2,500	917	1,500
Gate Remote Controls	300	415	300
Repairs & Maintenance			
Gates	5,000	3,300	3,500
Bridge	1,000	0	500
Common Area	18,000	17,600	18,000
Hemlock Treatment	0	0	0
Mail House	200	0	200
Office	300	977	300
Ponds	4,000	3,960	4,000
Pond Renovation (dam repair)	0	0	0
Roads (and signs)	45,000	53,865	40,000
Wells	20,000	52,000	31,500
Salaries and Wages <sup>4</sup>	27,000	29,405	27,500
Payroll Tax Expenses	2,000	2,135	1,900
Taxes	2,500	2,333	2,500
Utilities	17,000	18,397	18,000
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>155,900</b>	<b>197,016</b>	<b>159,900</b>
<b>Reserve Expense/Funding</b>			
To Reserve Funds	42,569	42,409	43,633
<b>Total Reserve Expense/Funding</b>	<b>42,569</b>	<b>42,409</b>	<b>43,633</b>
(Over)/Under Total Income	(161)	(31,448)	(440)
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$198,308</b>	<b>\$239,425</b>	<b>\$203,093</b>

<sup>1</sup>Projected and Pending Accountant Review<sup>2</sup>Construction Fees, Remote Sales, Debt Recovery, Late Fees & Interest, Insurance Claims<sup>3</sup>Fees & Subscriptions<sup>4</sup>Administrative, Contract Labor, Security

## Board of Directors Nominees

The terms of three board members, Rich Baker, Doug Colburn and Rebekah Montgomery expire this year. They have agreed to serve another term. Nominations may be made from the floor at the annual meeting.

### Rich Baker

Rich has been a member of the Blackberry community since 1999.

He graduated from Washington State University with a BS in Mechanical Engineering. He worked 15 years for General Electric as a member of the commercial nuclear power startup organization and at the Institute of Nuclear Operations in Atlanta for 7 years.

He served as the senior Westinghouse representative at ENWESA in Madrid, Spain and was a member of the ENWESA Board of Directors.

Rich spent two and a half years as a consultant to Mitsubishi Heavy Industries in Kobe, Japan as a member of their nuclear engineering organization.

He worked as a consultant at NuScale Power, a company pioneering small, scalable pressurized reactor technology, engineered with passive safety features.

### Doug Colburn

Doug and his wife Leigh have been homeowners/full-time residents of Blackberry Mountain since 2016. They moved here from Marietta, Georgia where Leigh was the principal of Marietta High School and Doug worked for United Health Care.

He is an active member of the Ellijay community and has served as the President of Gilmer County Optimists. He has also served recently as the chair of the River Advisory Committee for the Gilmer County Board of Commissioners.

Doug is an avid sportsman and loves the outdoors. He is dedicated to conservation and preserving the environment for future generations.

Doug currently serves as the Detective for the City of Ellijay Police Department. His career spans work at the local, state, and federal levels. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Public and Social Services and a Master of Science in Conflict Management from Kennesaw State University.

### Rebekah Montgomery

Rebekah and her husband Joe have been Blackberry residents since 2004, but prior to that have enjoyed many good times on Indian Cave Road at her father's cabin, which he built in 1983.

A graduate of Stetson University with a degree in education, she worked as an elementary school teacher for many years and retired in 2012.

In her home town of Rome, she is an enthusiastic community volunteer serving on non-profit boards and as an active volunteer for many others. She is a graduate of Leadership Georgia, class of 1999.

Blackberry is the favorite gathering place for her three daughters, their husbands, and six (soon to be seven) grandchildren.

These days she enjoys cooking, needlepoint and traveling with Joe.

### Blackberry Mountain Website

The BMA website is maintained as a resource for property owners. On the website you can download Design Committee rules, forms and applications, check for alerts, upcoming events and meetings, download the membership handbook which contains maps, Bylaws, CCRs and Rules, and read current and past issues of the *Blackberry Juice*.

## Welcome Our New Residents

### Danny & Alice Fernandez

49 Blackberry Falls Lane

### Anjannette & Barry Griffin

141 Indian Cave Road

### Robbie McMillan

553 Indian Cave Road

### Jim & Pam Morrow

168 Spring Lake Drive



The term wildland-urban interface was first described in the context of fire and fire fighting. Fire managers noticed that as development moved into rural areas new problems were occurring that they were not trained for.

In 1985, after the loss of over 1400 homes in Florida and California fires, the U.S. Forest Service and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) met and the concept known as the wildland-urban interface emerged. A direct result of the meeting was the development of the National Firewise program. A basic concept of the Firewise program is that responsibility is shared between homeowners, planners, and developers as well as fire managers. Please visit [Firewise.org](http://Firewise.org) to learn more about how to reduce the risk from wildfire for your home and your community.

If interested in a firewise risk assessment for your home, please contact Mason Turner, Gilmer County GFC Chief Ranger at 706 635-2363 or the Firewise Communities Coordinator at 706-897-1676 or [georgiafirewise@gfc.state.ga.us](mailto:georgiafirewise@gfc.state.ga.us)

## Mark Your Calendar

BMA Annual Meeting	December 6, 2025
1st Quarter Assessment Due	January 1, 2026
2nd Quarter Assessment Due	April 1, 2026
3rd Quarter Assessment Due	July 1, 2026
4th Quarter Assessment Due	October 1, 2026
Apple Festival	2nd, 3rd Weekends October, 2026