

7/29/2024

Hardwick Mountain Property Owners Association  
News Letter

Hi Members

Would like to take this time to update you on some projects the board has been working on. We have been continuing the on-going project of updating the Restrictive Covenants. During our annual meeting many of you were updated and a ballot was produced for voting on the changes. For those that were unable to attend the meeting a ballot was either mailed or hand delivered. I'm happy to report that we had 100% participation in the process, we needed a 2/3 quorum for approval and we had 96% vote to approve the changes to our Restrictive Covenants of Hardwick Mountain. We have a total of 28 members, needless to say this was a well-received change. Now to update you on the progress. We have successfully filed the new Restrictive Covenants with the Orange County Courts and the new Restrictive Covenants are now in effect. We will be posting them on the Hardwick Mountain web site soon. Rather than mail a bunch of paper and drive-up cost we are asking that you go to this web site and download your copy for your files, also open the attachment. We recognize that some will be challenged or not able to download this file and print. If this is the case, please contact either John Barnhill or Steve Harper and we will make sure you get a hard copy of the new R&C changes. Also, filed was an updated plat showing all lots

*After the annual meeting, several members approached the Board regarding the increasing number of deer within our subdivision. This has resulted in damage to expensive landscape plants, deer bedding down near residences [with the inherent risk of tick-borne illness], and extensive defoliation of the forest floor. The Board held a meeting and approved an effort to seek facts on possible solutions to manage the deer population on the mountain. The first step was to gather signatures of owners via a petition that were supportive of the idea of obtaining kill permits to stabilize the population [this step was necessary to begin the*

*process with the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources]. An email was also sent to the Association looking for feedback on such a program. While the majority of property owners support this concept, there is a minority view that is strongly opposed. Accordingly, the Board is no longer pursuing this approach.*

*Initial data uncovered during initial research on this effort includes the following.*

*- The deer population in Virginia has increased 5X since 1970 (about the time our subdivision began development). Without predators, the deer population can double in a single year. While the deer on Hardwick Mountain come and go, it is logical to assume that on average, we have a significantly larger population relative to a few decades ago.*

*- The number of deer harvested in Orange County by conventional hunting has decreased by half since it peaked in 2009. This is projected to continue declining, as is deer attrition from natural predators.*

*- An adult deer eats one ton of vegetation each year. This includes not only property owner plants, but also the young trees necessary to revitalize our forest as more mature trees die. This effect on the Hardwick Mountain forest has been noted by numerous long-time residents.*

*For those that are disappointed that this program is not moving forward, we are sorry. The Board is of the opinion that the current and projected deer population is a problem we need to address, but for us to act we must have more of a consensus within our Association. If there are other solutions that may mitigate this issue, please bring them forward to the Board for evaluation*

On another wildlife issue, Bears seem to be a continued problem. Many residents have reported the destruction of their bird feeders, and the destruction of trash cans. Also, problems with owls and hawks in chicken pens, along with raccoons. The only control we can exercise is removing the food source and maybe they won't visit. Taking your feeders in at night and securing our trash will help with this problem. This is pretty much an individual issue and there is not a whole lot the board can do other than spread the word.

During the annual meeting the issue of packages being left at the gate on the ground was still an issue. We spoke with the post office and had an understanding that the packages would be left at the Barboursville post office. However, there seemed to be some confusion with that idea and it is not working very well. A post office approved parcel box has been purchased. It will add four more larger compartments to leave packages in. It will work the same as we have now, the carrier will place your package in the box and leave the key in your locked mailbox. The box is here and waiting to be installed at our earliest convenience.

As we know it has been very dry with little rain-fall. Along the roadway several cigarette butts have been found, we are asking please smokers be careful. The fire hazard is very high now, not to mention its just plain trash on our roads.

Carl and Traci Prober have reported finding the Spotted Lanternfly on their lot. After doing some research on what they are, I now realized I have also seen these little critters. I'm not going into the depth of describing what these insects are, but I would encourage you to Google them and learn about them. I think you'll find this is a pest we can do without. Also, there are several control methods listed as well. Research them and learn about them.

One last issue! Road safety. Our roads are a very pleasant place to walk and exercise our pets. Also, many of us work along the roadways, with mowers, leaf blowers and weed eaters. Most of the time the engine is loud and ear protection is used and traffic cannot be heard. We are asking that if you see anyone on the road ways, please, please slow down. Let's create a safe environment for walking and exercise.

Thanks,

Board of Directors

Steve Harper

Vicki Barnhill

John Barnhill

Marc Cole

Jeremy Cole