The Biltmore Forest Chronicle

January 2025



New Commissioners Sworn-In

The Town's newly elected Board of Commissioners and Mayor were sworn in Tuesday, December 10, 2024 by Judge Max O. Cogburn, Jr. The new Board is made up of the following members:

- George F. Goosman III – Mayor (ggoosmann@biltmoreforest.org)
- Doris Loomis - Mayor Pro-Tem, Commissioner (dloomis@biltmoreforest.org)
- Drew Stephens – Commissioner (dstephens@biltmoreforest.org)
- Allan Tarleton – Commissioner (atarleton@biltmoreforest.org)

Former Commissioners Fran Cogburn and Glenn Kelly were thanked for their service to the Town with formal resolutions dedicated to their contributions. The Board holds their regular meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at 4:30 p.m. and invites the public to attend. New town email addresses for the mayor and each commissioner are listed above.






Debris Removal Update

Through Friday, January 24, 2025, the Town's debris removal contractor has removed over 322,000 cubic yards of vegetative debris from the public right of way. This debris has been processed into 120,000 cubic yards of wood chips that have been transferred to a mulch facility in Maggie Valley. In the entire disaster designated zone (16 counties), a total of 3.4 million cubic yards have been removed as of this writing. This means that 9.5% of the debris removed after Helene has been done so within Biltmore Forest's three square miles. For further comparison, this 16 county area is a total of 6,685 square miles. The Town comprises 0.045% of this total land area. To put it more plainly, the Town has done 210 times more on a relative basis than any jurisdiction in regards to vegetative debris removal. We are now seeing progress each day as our roadsides and public areas return to some previously recognizable state, but we know there remains much work to be done.

The Town's initial right of way debris estimate was 340,000 cubic yards. The contractor revised this estimate to 460,000 cubic yards shortly before the new year. This is the equivalent of four and a half football fields (100 yards long) piled 66 feet deep with debris.

The town has received $3,952,539.07 from FEMA for expedited debris removal from the public right of way. We were the first entity to request funding and the first entity to have funds obligated to us. To date, the Town has spent $4,690,050.51 on debris removal from the public right of way. The Town was the first entity to request our second allotment of expedited debris funding and we anticipate receiving this within the next several days. This second amount, $3,112,011.44, is anticipated to fund the remaining public right of way debris removal and repay the amount the Town has already spent over and above our initial allotment.

The Town's debris removal project page is updated daily and we encourage all residents to review the site frequently to see the updated information on debris removal. The site can be accessed at the following link: https://www.biltmoreforest.org/projects/hurricane-helene-debris-removal

Employee Birthdays

December

Tony Williams

January

Brandon Ball

Krystal Curtis

Jonathan Kanipe

Brooklyn Martin-Gigi

February

Eric Anderson

March

Debbie Hill

April

Kim Rhinehart

Patrick Ridgeway

Employee Anniversaries

Harry Buckner – 5 years

Shane Burrell – 20 years

Chris Beddingfield – 7 years

Mike Dale – 4 years

Matt Kelly – 15 years

Shelby Frady – 6 years

Brooklyn Martin-Gigi – 2 years

Kenny Merritt – 14 years

Kim Rhinehart – 24 years

Daniel Rice – 5 years

Lu Riley – 6 years

Aslyne Tate – 6 years

Joe Zub – 3 years

PRIVATE PROPERTY DEBRIS REMOVAL

The Town of Biltmore Forest is **accepting applications** for a Private Property Debris Removal program (PPDR) through FEMA that can assist residents with:

- Removal of potentially eligible storm-generated debris from private property, private roads and/or driveways
- Demolition of hazardous structures

DEBRIS:

Eligible debris must be the direct result of Hurricane Helene and must be located within the Town of Biltmore Forest. To be considered eligible the removal of the debris must be in the public interest, meaning:

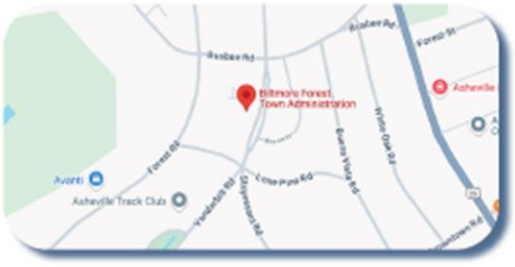
- Eliminates immediate threats to life, public health, or safety
- Eliminates immediate threats of significant damage to improved public or private property

Types of eligible storm-generated debris includes:

- Vegetative debris
- Construction and demolition debris
- White goods (household appliances)
- Household hazardous waste

If you are a residential property owner that meets the criteria for this program, DebrisTech personnel will be accepting applications at:

Biltmore Forest Town Hall
February 6: 9:00 am to 2:00 pm
February 7: 9:00 am to 2:00 pm
February 8: 9:00 am to 2:00 pm
355 Vanderbilt Road, Asheville, NC 28803



REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:

- **Most Recent Tax Bill/Record *** (NOT OPTIONAL)**
- **Valid Driver's License or State Issued I.D.**
- **Utility Bill from the time of event (power, water or gas)**
- **Homeowner's Insurance Policy**
- **House Deed**
  **Deed is only required if signing up for demolition of a structure*

Call 501-604-6453 if you have additional questions

Chief's Corner

As we work through winter and look toward springtime, we must remain vigilant with our safety and security. Fraud seems to be one of the most common types of criminal activity we are currently dealing with. Technology has advanced to the point that frauds are hard to detect. Here are some tips that will help prevent you from becoming a victim.

- **Be skeptical:** Don't trust caller ID, and be wary of free trial offers.
- **Research:** Check with the Better Business Bureau (BBB) or your state's consumer protection agency to verify the legitimacy of a company, charity, or seller.
- **Use strong passwords:** Use unique, strong passwords for all your accounts.
- **Keep your software up to date:** Install antivirus, firewall, and email filter software, and update your operating system and applications.
- **Use secure websites:** Look for "HTTPS" at the beginning of a website's URL.
- **Monitor your accounts:** Check your accounts regularly for unauthorized transactions.
- **Report suspected fraud:** If you suspect fraud, report it to the account holder, such as your bank or credit card company. You can also report it to: IdentityTheft.gov.
- **Be careful with your personal information:** Don't provide your personal information to anyone you don't know, and don't enter it into public computers.
- **If it sounds too good to be true it probably is:** Be cautious of things that don't make sense.
- **You can't win a contest you did not enter:** Many scams will start with you winning a large prize that you must first pay the taxes or a large fee to receive the prize.

As always if you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Biltmore Forest Police Department.

Here are some vehicle safety tips for the last leg of winter:

Prepare Your Car for Winter

In addition to annual maintenance, here are some tips to winterize your car:
Test your battery, battery power drops as the temperature drops
Check the tire pressure; tire pressure drops as the temperature drops
Check your wiper blades and replace them if needed
Add wiper fluid rated for -30 degrees
Remember to keep your car's emergency kit fully stocked, too.

Before You Start Out

Clean your car's external camera lenses and side view mirrors so you'll be able to see what's around you
In frigid weather, you may want to warm up the car before you drive it
If the forecast looks iffy, wait out the storm if possible; if you must travel, share your travel plans and route with someone before you leave.

Thanks,

Chief Chris Beddingfield
Email: cbeddingfield@biltmoreforest.org

UNC, NC State and USC are working with LEADS 

Lyme Cases: 57 reported

Recent Testing: August 2023 – 11 ticks tested – 4 tested positive for a tick-borne bacteria (2 Lyme, 3 anaplasmosis, 1 both)

Last summer, our Town Manger Jonathan Kanipe was contacted by a doctor from the University of North Carolina Medical School. Dr. Ross Boyce has been researching tick-borne diseases in western North Carolina for several years and read about our Lyme and other tick-borne cases and the efforts of our town to address the problem. Dr. Ross brought together a team of ten researchers from UNC, NC State and the University of South Carolina, and offered to work with Biltmore Forest as a pilot community. After several calls and meetings, the university teams developed a plan to study Biltmore Forest by creating a baseline and testing various tick reduction approaches. Mayor Goosmann and the Commissioners approved the efforts in August of 2024.

Despite the storm, research began in November with the first monthly tick collection conducted by USC. They "dragged" 19 properties over two days. The properties were selected from the LEADS survey respondents, homeowners were contacted and agreed to participate. The team collected 35 adult ticks and 57 larval ticks, noting the larval collection, was highly unusual for the time of year. Testing is underway at a university lab, and the results will be shared. December was cold when the team returned, and no ticks were collected. The monthly efforts will continue into 2025, with a team visiting from NC State later this month. Tick collection vials will be available at the Town Hall, so please continue to collect ticks from your yards, pets, or person. Again, if you are bitten by a tick, please keep the tick and contact Angela Newnam or the Town Hall for instructions on how to get the tick tested quickly.

Once the baseline is established, various remedies will be evaluated and tested, including landscape management, small mammal treatments, spray programs, awareness efforts and deer reduction programs. For now, please continue the debris removal which will aid in tick reduction. In addition, the cleanup of downed trees and debris will reduce the chance of forest fires.

Hurricane Helene, while devastating to our trees and canopy, has a silver lining in that it increased the sun profile in Biltmore Forest, naturally reducing the tick habitat.

UNC-Chapel Hill Team

- Ross Boyce, MD, MS- Assistant Professor of Medicine and Assistant Professor of Epidemiology
- Dana Giandomenico, MPH, CPH, REHS-Vector-borne disease program manager
- Peyton Pretsch, MPH- Doctoral Graduate Student

NC State University Team

- Michael Reiskind, PHD, MPH- Professor and Director of Entomology Department
- Allie Yackley- Laboratory Manager
- Regan Daniels, MS-Research Laboratory Technician

University of South Carolina Team

- Melissa Nolan, PhD, MPH -Associate Professor in Epidemiology and Biostatistics Department
- Sean Sweeney, MS – Doctoral Graduate Student
- Katherine Brown, MPH- Lead Vector Surveillance Technician
- Kayla Bramlett, MS- Research Specialist

Town of Biltmore Forest
P.O. Box 5352
Asheville, NC 28813

Thank You

Over the past four months, the Town, County, and entire region have experienced exceptional devastation, heartache, and loss. There is no question this has been the most dramatic natural disaster for this region and yet, the compassion, patience, and resolve of Biltmore Forest residents and citizens from this entire region has been remarkable. The volunteerism exhibited immediately after the storm was incredible. The incredibly uplifting sights of neighbors volunteering and helping each other – clearing roads to help the Town, helping clear driveways for each other, and just checking in on each other – was beyond extraordinary. When faced with challenge, everyone worked together for the greater good. This is something for which we can all be proud and that we are happy to say "Thank You" for, to everyone.

Thank you for your patience. Thank you for your support. Thank you for your understanding and compassion to Town employees, to volunteers coming from across the nation to help, and to those around you. Thank you for continuing to represent the best of what we all are and for coming to the aid of those who needed it in everyone's worst moment. We have all persevered and will continue to do so.

Mayor
George F. Goosmann, III

Commissioners
Doris P. Loomis – Mayor Pro-Tem
Drew Stephens
Allan Tarleton

Town Manager
Jonathan Kanipe
(828)274-0824
jkanipe@biltmoreforest.org

Police Chief
Chris Beddingfield
(828)274-0822
cbeddingfield@biltmoreforest.org

Director of Public Works
Harry Buckner
(828)274-3919
hbuckner@biltmoreforest.org



Chief Beddingfield was nominated and elected to the NCACP Executive Committee. His service begins immediately, and he will be filling the role of Sergeant of Arms for the first year. Congratulations to Chief Beddingfield on this honor! We are very proud of you and thank you for all that you do for The Town of Biltmore Forest!

Chief Beddingfield was sworn in by Justice Trey Allen. (pictured, left)