The Biltmore Forest Chronicle

September 2025

From The Mayor

Dear Residents of Biltmore Forest,

It has been almost one year since Helene came to town and left us with the most devastating damage to ever happen in the Town of Biltmore Forest. FYI, of all the debris that the hurricane caused to come down in North Carolina, Biltmore Forest had 2.79% of it, while only accounting for 0.0255% of the land area. We lost between 10,000 and 20,000 trees, and approximately ten or more of inches of rain did a number on our roads, driveways, yards, parks, and homes. Many homes suffered extensive damage, and several are still not through with repairs needed to return them to a livable place. The large, double trailer trucks have left, and we are slowly returning to a normal way of life. We were delighted to see them arrive and happy to see them go. We are about to come to the end of our dealings with FEMA. The town has cleaned up all within our right of ways. Our residents are working hard to get their properties back to a restored condition. Harry Buckner and the Public Works Department are diligently working to bring all our parks back to where residents can safely use them again, and repair the many other issues the storm caused. This will continue to be an ongoing process. I find myself continuing to be amazed by our Town Manager, Jonathan Kanipe's, farsighted approach in dealing with the Federal Government (FEMA). I want to thank our Town Hall staff for their continued day-to-day assistance with the residents along with their many other responsibilities. Our Police Chief, Chris Beddingfield, has kept the Police Department active in continuing to make our town safe.

Looking to the future, our Commissioners are turning their attention to building a new police station. Our current building is over one hundred years old, and, prior to that, it was used as a volunteer fire department; which now has numerous hazardous problems. The police deserve to have a better and safer environment in which to work. The new police station will be where the salt and sand storage building is currently. The salt and sand storage building will be relocated to a new location. Doing the above will improve the overall appearance of our Town Hall area.

We can now see the light at the end of the tunnel. We are excited to watch our town return to what we remember as a quiet, serene community. We are fortunate to have an excellent group of employees who will continue to keep us safe, and they are dedicated to making our lives better.

I, for one, along with our Commissioners, want to thank all the residents for their patience, hard work, dedication, and for helping each other. I am honored and proud to be The Mayor of such a wonderful town.

Sincerely,

George Goosmann III, Mayor

TOWN of Biltmore Forest

Hurricane Helene Anniversary Commemoration

Saturday, September 27, 2025

Celebrating Resilience, Compassion, and Community

Almost one year ago, Hurricane Helene put our community to the test. To mark the anniversary of Helene, the Friends of Biltmore Forest Committee is hosting a commemoration at Town Hall on Saturday, September 27 from 4-6:30 pm for all town residents. This anniversary gathering will honor the resilience, generosity, and compassion shown by neighbors and Town staff who stepped up for one another in countless ways. You may RSVP for this event by emailing FOBF@biltmoreforest.org or calling the Town Hall office. Light refreshments will be provided.

Photo Slideshow and Story Collection

The committee is creating a community slideshow to be shown during the September 27 event. Residents are encouraged to share photographs taken **before, during, or after Hurricane Helene**—whether capturing the storm itself, recovery efforts, or moments of connection and kindness. In addition to photos, we are building a **community memory book** that reflects the voices and experiences of our residents.

Residents are invited to contribute short stories or reflections (100–300 words) about your experience of Helene. These could include:

- Acts of kindness you witnessed or received
- Moments of resilience or strength
- Surprising or humorous moments during recovery
- Lessons learned in the storm's aftermath

We also welcome poems, children's drawings, and messages from community leaders.

📷 How to Submit:

Please email photos, short video clips and stories to **FOBF@biltmoreforest.org**. The event committee will curate submissions into a projected slideshow that will run continuously during the commemoration as well as a book of memories that can be viewed during the event.

Helene Recovery in Biltmore Forest – By the Numbers

<u>Vegetative Loss and Debris Removal</u>

- Total Vegetative Debris Removed from Biltmore Forest:
  405,187.30 cubic yards (equivalent to just over four football fields, 66 feet in depth)
  - By comparison, just over **3 million cubic yards** were removed from the remainder of Buncombe County.
  - The Town accounts for **3 square miles**, with the remainder of Buncombe County equaling **657 square miles**.
  - The Town's debris removal efforts accounted for **135,000 cubic yards per square mile**. This amount was **4,567 cubic yards per square mile** for the remainder of Buncombe County.
  - This does not disparage what the County accomplished, but rather, puts into sharp relief the extreme nature of the debris removal within Biltmore Forest.

Helene Recovery in Biltmore Forest – By the Numbers - Continued

  - For the twenty-three mountain counties generally considered to be within Western North Carolina, **the total land area is approximately 11,750 square miles**. The total removal from the public right of way and waterways in this area, as of September 10, 2025, is just over **14.5 million cubic yards**.
  - For this entire region, that equals **1,234 cubic yards per square mile**. Again, all efforts for debris removal from Hurricane Helene have been herculean, but when put into focus, these relative numbers demonstrate the outsized dramatic impact for debris removal within Biltmore Forest.
  - By percentage, the **Town's debris removal accounted for 2.79 percent of all vegetative debris removed**. The Town's land area accounts for **0.0255 percent of the total land area** for Western North Carolina.
- Total Vegetative Debris Converted into Wood Chips:
  163,886.20 cubic yards
  - The bulk of this debris was taken to a mulch processing facility in Maggie Valley, NC. This site filled up in May 2024, and the Town subsequently began taking wood chips to a public landfill in Haywood County.
- It is estimated that somewhere between **15,000 and 20,000** trees came down or were damaged from the storm. The Town's debris contractor removed **489 trees** from public spaces, rights of way, or private property, and removed **360 hanging or dangerous branches** from trees.

<u>Financial Impacts</u>

- To date, the Town has expended **$9,648,798** on Helene related recovery. The bulk of these expenses were paid for debris removal, in the amount of **$9,349,558**.
- We have received **$6,285,729** from FEMA, paid through the State of NC.
- The Town currently has over **$500,000 in process** at the state level, and a third round of debris removal reimbursement of **$2.5 million being processed at the federal level**.
- As of today, we estimate an **additional $2.5-3 million** will be requested in reimbursement before our projects are fully paid out and then closed out.
- The Town has **received nearly $2.5 million from the State of North Carolina** via disaster cashflow loans. These funds have allowed the Town to continue regular activities while still working through disaster recovery.
- In the Land of Sky Region (Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania Counties) over **$275,000,000 in damages** have been inventoried. **$79,485,677 has been obligated** from the federal level thus far.
- The Town has the **most obligated projects (12) in the entire region** and is fourth, behind Buncombe County, Henderson County, and the City of Asheville, in total funds obligated.
- **Total funds obligated for the Town as of 8/9/25 (the last reporting date) are $9,659,648.80.**
  - **Publicly Available Source for this data, accessed 9/9/25:**
    - **https://app.smartsheet.com/b/publish?EQBCT=7798bf0c612a48dda3e29797f522661b**
  - **Note: Obligated funds do not equal funds *dispersed* to the local government. These are funds dedicated to projects that are approved.**

National Night Out

Here in Biltmore Forest, we are so lucky to live in such a tight knit community. Your police department takes great pride in a high level of customer service and knowing our residents on a more personal level. One tool that we use is a community program known as National Night Out. National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make our communities safer. National Night Out enhances the relationship between residents and law enforcement while bringing back a true sense of community. Furthermore, it provides a great opportunity to bring police and citizens together in a positive environment. National Night Out began in 1984 in an effort to bridge the gap and build relationships between law enforcement and the community, it has grown tremendously since then. The event is traditionally scheduled for the first Tuesday in August. Many departments have moved their events to October for various reasons. Unfortunately, last year we canceled our National Night Out event due to the multiple challenges created by Hurricane Helene. We will be celebrating our 2025 National Night Out on Monday October 13th, 4PM-7PM at Rosebank Park. We will have our police officers and telecommunicators ready to have meaningful discussions, build relationships and answer any questions you might have. There will be equipment displays, inflatables, snow cones, popcorn, cotton candy and cornhole boards. We will be giving giftbags as long as the supply lasts. Please come join us for a fun filled family event and let's make our community even stronger!

2025 NATIONAL NIGHT Out®

POLICE • COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



Winter Sapling Give Away



This winter the Town will once again give away saplings to our residents. The tree give-away will occur in the middle January, so mark your calendars! This year's offering will include Red Maples, White Oaks, and Redbuds. Due to the high demand from the last event, we have increased the number of saplings to hand out. When the time gets closer to January, the town will provide the date and time at which you can come by town hall and receive your free tree sapling(s). This will be on a first come first serve basis and to those who weren't able to participate in our spring sapling give away. The Town will also provide planting and maintenance tips and tricks to help ensure the success of your newly planted trees. We hope to see you there!

Tax Notice Reminder

Friendly reminder that 2025 property tax notices have been mailed out for your convenience. Payment is due January 5, 2026 by 5:00 p.m. Payments may be made in person with cash, check, or debit/credit card with a convenience fee, or online on our website at **www.biltmoreforest.org**. If you need any payment arrangements or have direct questions, please contact the Tax Collector, Krystal Curtis via phone or email.



Brush Collection Overview

During the Helene recovery, the Town utilized our forces to assist with storm debris removal each workday through June 15. Prior to resuming our regular schedule, the Town took the truck out of service for maintenance and repairs due to this extensive use. These repairs were completed in the middle of July, and routine brush pick-up resumed at that time.

In order to assist the Town, staff, and to help all your fellow residents, we ask that everyone please abide by the Town's brush policies and ordinances. Brush materials left at the roadside that do not meet these regulations will not be picked up and are the responsibility of the property owner. As an example, the Town **will not and is unable** to pick up stumps. There are several locations in town where stumps are on the roadside or road edge. These **will not** be picked up by the Town and must be removed immediately by the homeowner. The Town is also unable to pick up grass clippings or bamboo. These are not allowed to be taken to the brush facility. Finally, please remember that ALL trees and tree material removed by a contractor must be taken off-site by the contractor. These and other non-allowed items are the responsibility of the property owner and should be disposed of immediately.

A copy of the Town's brush ordinance is available below. Please review these regulations to ensure your brush complies with the Town's ordinances prior to placing it at the roadside. We appreciate everyone's assistance; compliance with the ordinances allows for orderly pickup and ensures that we can provide efficient and effective service to all.

Town Brush Ordinance

1. Brush gathered by anyone other than the resident must be removed by that same company (i.e. if a landscape company is gathering your brush, it must be removed by the landscape company).
2. Only 15 cubic yards of brush (one-half truck load) should be placed curbside per lot per month. Please do not place more brush out immediately after brush is removed from your lot.
3. Stack piles neatly and parallel to the roadway. Trim limbs to a maximum 6-foot length. Please stack in one pile and do not place multiple piles along the road.
4. Be aware of where you place your brush - do not place in the public roadway, in blind spots, under shrubs, trees, or power lines, on top of storm inlets, meter boxes, or in front of fire hydrants.
5. All brush must be placed on the lot from which it is collected. Do not place brush on town property and under no circumstances should brush or leaves be placed inside a park, on public property, or on a neighbor's property. This is considered littering.
6. Most importantly: The following debris is not allowed in a brush pile and will not be removed by the Town: grass clippings, dirt, mulch, bamboo, lumber, pallets, pumpkins, wreaths, dog waste, construction or demolition debris, paper or anything other than brush collected from your lot. If this material is in your brush pile, it will not be picked up.

Recovery Efforts – Reforestation

After Hurricane Helene, the Board of Commissioners prioritized forest restoration as part of the town's recovery efforts. In April 2025, the Town began moving forward with a restoration plan that composed of two specific tracks.

Track 1: Public Spaces and Parks

The Town focused this spring on non-native invasive species (NNIS) control and removal. Eco-Foresters – a non-profit organization based in Asheville – conducted this work and coordinated with the Town on reforestation planning. The debris clearing work performed by the Town's contractors in public spaces – such as Brooklawn Park, Rosebank Park, and Lower Vanderbilt Park – allowed access to areas previously inundated with these NNIS and an opportunity for eradication.

In Brooklawn Park, the Town performed extensive invasive species removal through Eco-Foresters. Erosion control and live stake planting will occur this winter, with plans for an extensive stream bank restoration that we hope will be funded through state grants. Similar work occurred in the lower sections of Rosebank Park and Lower Vanderbilt Park (bounded by Vanderbilt and East Forest Roads). The Town will likely perform this invasive species removal for five (5) consecutive years to fully eliminate the invasive species from the Town's public spaces.

To date, the Eco-Foresters team has conducted extensive work on nearly thirty (30) acres of Town property. They have removed many NNIS, including multiflora rose, Asiatic bittersweet, Chinese privet, autumn olive, Japanese honeysuckle, English ivy, Japanese barberry, leatherleaf Mahonia, trifoliate orange, chocolate vine, bamboo, and Miscanthus. The screen capture below is an example of the detailed reporting provided by Eco-Foresters, all of which may be found on the Town's website under the "Project" tab.

5/13/2025

NNIS efforts at the Town of Biltmore Forest on May 13th, 2025, began with bamboo removal approximately 0.04 miles down Park Road. A bamboo patch roughly ⅓ acre in size exists along the creekbank. Japanese Wisteria has become entangled with this bamboo in some places making removal challenging. All cut bamboo was stacked next to the road. A crew of three technicians 29 ounces of Imazapyr/Glyphosate solution at a concentration of 50% was dispensed in bamboo treatments.

The afternoon was spent continuing sut-stem operations in the southernmost polygon working north and immediate to the creek. Invasives here were mild to moderate and majority Autumn Olive. The other crew of four technicians joined us at around 2:30 to finish out the day. Altogether we dispensed 4.5 ounces of Triclopyr-3 at 50% solution and 30 ounces of Glyphosate at 50% solution on 3.2 acres. See orange polygon for cut-stem. See blue polygon for bamboo removal.







Recovery Efforts – Reforestation Continued

Track 2: Private Property Recommendations

However, the Town's removal of NNIS in public spaces is only effective if residents conduct the same work on private property. We are asking and encouraging residents to thoughtfully engage in restoration that includes the removal of NNIS along with replanting of native species. The Town provided native "Restoration Tree Saplings" at an event in late March 2025 and will do so again in January 2026 to aid this effort. This two-pronged approach - native species planting coupled with NNIS removal from private and public properties – will allow the Town to recover from Helene with a more robust and native environment. There is now a citizen-led group dedicated to providing information and direct assistance for other residents on NNIS removal and appropriate planting. This group is in its nascent stage, but intends to be a robust network that provides information, education, and direct help for those who want to encourage appropriate removal and replanting on their property.

New Town Ordinance

Board of Commissioners Adopts New Ordinance related to Feeding Wild Animals

As most residents of Biltmore Forest know, the Town is home to many wild animals! The largest of these, the black bear, frequents the Town's woods and forests and is often seen by residents. Recently, the Town has encountered several instances of individual property owners directly feeding bears. As specified in the national BearWise program,

> *"Intentionally feeding bears or allowing them to find anything that smells or tastes like food teaches bears to approach homes and people looking for more."*

This results in more direct interaction between people and bears, which can directly lead to threats to public health, safety, and welfare. As a result, the Town's Board of Commissioners adopted an ordinance at their September meeting to specifically prohibit this type of activity. The Town is exploring the possibility of becoming a BearWise community and we encourage all residents to review the recommendations and actions to make your property a BearWise property by visiting https://bearwise.org/

A copy of the full ordinance is below and the Town appreciates everyone's adherence to these regulations.

New Town Ordinance regarding Feeding Wild Animals

Town Code Of Ordinances

Chapter 90.11 Feeding Wild Animals

The keeping, possessing, harboring, feeding, or attracting of animals, wild, feral or domesticated, which threaten the public health, safety and welfare of the Town are prohibited. Prohibited actions include, but are not limited to, attracting bears or other wild animals that may pose a danger to humans, wildlife, or domestic animals, or cause damage to property including property owned by others. Provided, however, nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit keeping or maintaining a bird feeder or feeding birds, unless keeping a bird feeder attracts bears or other wild animals posing a threat to the public health safety and welfare, and an animal control officer, police officer, or other Town officer orders the cessation of the feeding of the birds. The determination as to whether an animal or animals and the attraction of same poses a threat to the public health, safety and welfare shall be in the discretion of the Town.

(a) For the purpose of this section, a threat to the public health, safety and welfare of the Town and a danger to humans, wildlife or domestic animals shall mean the potential for human injury or death, the potential risk of disease transmission between animal species and humans, or the increased potential for death or injury to bears, livestock, domestic animals, human, or property.

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

Upcoming Blood Drive with The Blood Connection

Thursday, October 30, 2025
1:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Biltmore Forest Town Hall – Social Room
355 Vanderbilt Road Asheville, NC 28803

The Town will be hosting a blood drive with The Blood Connection. When you donate, you can save up to three lives! Take a look at some helpful hints below for a successful blood donation.

- Sign up for a donation appointment at: the QR code below
- Get a good night's sleep prior to donating
- Don't skip any meals – make sure to eat iron rich foods as well!
- Stay hydrated and drink an extra 16 oz. of water before you donate
- Bring your proper identification documents – a driver's license, a state ID, ect.
- Be sure to take it easy! Avoid heavy exercise and lifting after your donation

The Town thanks you for making a difference in your community!

Please email jhedrick@biltmoreforest.org with any questions or assistance signing up!

Scan Here to Donate!

Our goal is to collect 27 units of blood and get 40 appointments prior to our donation day

Or visit:
https://donate.thebloodconnection.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/285026

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Drew Stephens
Allan Tarleton

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