

Rabun County Alliance

formerly West Rabun Property Owners ~ Est. 2001



Fall 2019 Newsletter

“Seeking Leadership and Accountability in Government”

IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO RCA MEMBERS

The RCA wants to make sure you are receiving your Quarterly Newsletter. Shortly you will receive a mailed postcard from the RCA which asks you to confirm the receipt of this Newsletter. No action is required if you received the Newsletter. If you did not receive it (either digitally or via mail) you have two options to let us know. One: email us at rabuncountyalliance@gmail.com, Or two: place the postcard in an envelope and mail to us at the address shown on the postcard.

In order to receive the Newsletter by mail vs. digital you must email us at the email address shown above to request this. *As noted above, if you are currently receiving the Newsletter by mail no additional action is required.*

LAKE BURTON DRAWDOWN

We have received the following information regarding lake drawdowns. The only lake for which a drawdown is proposed for the 2019/2020 winter season is Lake Burton, which is scheduled as follows:

- November 1, 2019: Drawdown starts from normal elevation of 1,865 feet
- December 31, 2019 Down 7 feet to 1,858 feet
- February 1, 2020 Refill begins
- March 1, 2020 Up to within 5 feet of normal pool (1,860 feet)
- May 1, 2020 Back to normal elevation of 1,865 feet

The next drawdown on Lake Rabun is scheduled for November, 2020, and the schedule for Lake Seed is January, 2021.

POTENTIAL SALE OF NATIONAL FOREST LANDS

Editor's Note: This article is drawn from an article that was published in the Clayton Tribune. The ramifications of this potential actions will be of concern to a large number large number of County residents and second homeowners! We have summarized the issue in this issue in this article but those who did not see the article printed in the Tribune would like to learn more about it can find the entire article on our website (www.rabuncountyalliance.com).

The October 31 issue of the Clayton Tribune contained an article regarding the potential sale of National Forest Service land (of 3,841 acres that could be potentially sold, 1,229 acres are in Rabun County). A bill was passed by Congress which permits sales of land which “are isolated tracts” and “do not give good administrative or public access.”

District Ranger for the Chattooga River Ranger District, Ryan Foote, commented in on the issue. “Even us internally at the agency were like, What? Wait a minute. So, this is the piece of legislation that is giving us the authority to sell these lands or not sell anything.” Regarding moving forward with the sale, he said “That’s still on the table.” He also said “I didn’t get into this agency to sell off public land,” and indicted that they sell land with a mindset of “what could be picked up for the public (to use).”

And it should be noted that the Rabun County Board of Commissioners “showed support and agreed to sell land in Rabun County” when discussions began in 2011. Only one county declined being part of the sale, and the U. S. Forest Service plans to check again with agreeing counties to be sure they are still on board.

Nicole Hayler, Executive Director of the Chattooga Conservancy, asked Ranger Foote if “there is a way to place Conservation Easements on any of these lands, to which Ranger Foote responded that the U. S. Forest Service (USFS) is not able to acquire land that has a Conservation Easement in place. But he also

COMMUNITY CALENDAR: Visit the Chamber of Commerce at gamountains.com for Rabun County events.

Visit georgiapowerlakes.com for helpful lake information from Georgia Power.

Visit lakerabun.org, lbca.net, and seedlake.org for the various Association events.

Men’s Christian Fellowship meets every Friday, 7:45–9:00am (706-782-7425 for more info).

Visit rabuncountyalliance.com for items of importance you may hear or wonder about between newsletters.

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added that if the land is sold in Rabun County, the USFS does not have to reinvest that money in Rabun County. When asked if there is a time frame for selling this land, Ranger Foote said “We don’t even know if this sale will happen within the next five years.”

Hayler was quoted “This is a trial balloon. So, it’s up to Rabun County to set an expectation on how to handle this.” And Stephen Arbitter, County Commissioner, said “It’s great that there’s so much interest in preserving our mountains,” and that he focuses on tourism as a commissioner and that “public lands and mountain tops are a big draw for the industry.” He also said that “Now is the time to start having those conversations.”

RCA understands that a variety of opinions on this issue might exist within its readership. We strongly encourage all readers to delve deeper into the issue (look at the full issue on our website and seek answers to questions you might have, and the voice your opinion to County officials and Commissioners. ***The more that such officials hear from locals, the more what they hear will affect what kind of positions they take on the ultimate outcome.***

HELP BRING BIG RED BACK TO LIFE

(Approved by LBCA Executive Committee on November 6th)

The Lake Burton Civic Association is in the process of restoring Big Red back to its original 1948 condition. The restored fire engine will be put on display at community events and featured in parades to help promote the importance of our Volunteer Fire Departments and encourage community support. “The goal is to feature BIG RED in community activities as a means of assisting with the continuous need to recruit new volunteers,” says Tom Madison, LBCA Board Member and member of the Tallulah-Persimmon Fire Station. While the final cost to restore BIG RED to its original glory is not yet finalized, the LBCA believes the cost will be in the \$30,000 to \$50,000 range.

A restoration services provider has been engaged in Gainesville, GA to provide the entire restoration services at a significantly discounted cost. The first step will be to complete an initial assessment of the engine, brakes and drive train components. No one is quite sure how long it has been since BIG RED was able to be run. After the initial assessment, the expected cost of the restoration project will be updated and the scope of the next phase of restoration will be determined.

An initial donation of \$5,000 has already been received for funding of the initial phase of restoration assessment. Since being removed from service in 1997, the “old pumper” has been parked by the Mountain Patrol office on Burton Dam Road. Assuming the funds needed for restoration costs can be obtained quickly, the LBCA hopes to complete the project in time for BIG RED to be featured in the upcoming Lake Burton Centennial Celebration events planned for next summer. ***The names of donors contributing \$500 or more will be engraved on a plaque to be displayed on BIG RED to honor their support.***

Your tax-deductible donations to the BIG RED restoration project can be made in several different ways:

- Make donation checks out to THE LAKE BURTON CIVIC ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION (LBCAF)* and include a notation that the donation is restricted for the restoration and maintenance of BIG RED. Make checks directly payable to the Lake Burton Civic Association at P. O. Box 1988, Clayton, GA 30525
- Or, make a donation of stock from a brokerage account.

Contact Tom Madison for more information at 770-843-8841 (phone or text) or email trm.madison@gmail.com.

*The LBCAF was formed by the LBCA in 2000 as a supporting 501(c)(3) charitable foundation to receive tax deductible charitable contributions.

CITY OF CLAYTON ELECTION RESULTS

The results of the city of Clayton election held on Tuesday, November 5, are now in, and are as follows:

<u>Office</u>	<u>Elected</u>
Clayton Council Post 3	Kevin Woodrow Blalock
Clayton Council Post 4	David Cross
Clayton Council Post 5	John Bradshaw
Dillard Council Post 2	Gordon Jenkins
Dillard Council Post 4	Carron Grist
Dillard Council Post 6	Jack Roberts
Tallulah Falls Mayor	Mike Early
Tallulah Falls Council (2)	Craig Weatherly Joey Fountain
Tiger Mayor	Mike Carnes
Tiger Council (4)	Karen Lovell, Pete Marziliano Ronald Moore, Jackie Watts
Sky Valley Mayor	Hollie Steil
Sky Valley Council (3)	Bill Oliver, Ed Morely Bruce Turner

(These are the results that were provided to RCA. The results will be certified by the Rabun County Elections Commission on Friday, November 8.)

RABUN COUNTY ALLIANCE FINANCIALS

The RCA financial report from November 2018 through October 2019 is as follows:

Printing	\$ 2,116.27
Mailing	1,860.21
Postage	866.70
Website	343.95
Entertainment	<u>75.86</u>
Total	\$ 5,262.99
Balance on hand	\$ 5,222.78

PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS

In America, statistics predict one hundred and seventy thousand men will receive the news that they have prostate cancer this year. And statistically thirty-two thousand men will die from the disease in 2019. Both are increases over 2018 statistics. Prostate cancer remains the second leading cause of deaths in men. We are pleased to report that great strides in early detection and treatment have been made in the last decade.

On October 26, eleven brave men and one resilient woman braved rain and 40-degree temperatures to meet at the Rabun County Golf Course to play 18 holes of golf. Why did they do this? To raise funds for a charitable contribution. This fundraiser was the 16th annual Prostate Care Awareness Resource (PCAR) tournament and raised over \$1,000! Congratulations to these brave souls for their dedication and willingness to brave difficult conditions to help others!

The PCAR was created by my son Redding in memory of his grandfather who died of prostate cancer. His journey began with a bicycle ride across America to raise charitable contributions. Now PCAR has established an annual event to raise more funds to benefit others!

Regarding prostate cancer, things are definitely improving. Good doctors are nearby, screening works and new treatment modalities are being created with fewer side effects. Please consider assisting this fight by joining PCAR. For more information, contact me at 706-7825-3572. *Dr. Guy Gober*

FARMHOUSE MARKET LAKE BURTON TO OPEN SOON

Editor's note: *When the original Lake Burton Grocery (LBG) burned in June of 2014, it was a tragedy for the West Rabun Community as well as the owners of LBG, Joe and Patti Durkin. (Patti is a passive investor, and their daughter, Barbara Giovino, is also an investor and co-operator with Joe). Fortunately, 13 individuals independently offered to help rebuild a new structure and rent it to Barbara and Joe. So, for the last four and a half years Lake Burton Grille & Grocery (LBG&G) has served our community. Our thanks go out to Joe and Barbara for their service to all of us! Over the last few months Joe and Barbara made the decision to shut down operations and let a new operator take a turn at serving our community.*

Many of you have probably noticed the extensive renovations, signage and exterior painting being made to the former LBG&G located at the intersection of US 76 and Jones Bridge Road. All of this is in preparation of the early November opening of Farmhouse Market Lake Burton (FMLB)!

FMLB is the creation of Chef Vince Scafiti, whose groundbreaking Farmhouse Restaurant in an old home in northeast Persimmon Valley several years ago established his reputation as one of the premier Chefs in the Northeast Georgia Region. Several years ago, Vince moved the Farmhouse Restaurant to the Discovery Center building at Waterfall Country Club where he serves both the General Public and Club Members Wednesday through Saturday each week. So, we decided to ask Chef Vince to tell us a little about his experience and plans for FMLB. *Sam King*

RCA: So, Chef, tell us a little about how you came into the restaurant business?

Chef Vince: "I grew up in an old school traditional Sicilian family in north eastern Ohio. My passion for food stems from family meals prepared with attention to detail, perfected family recipes using farm fresh ingredients, locally grown whenever possible. I have tried to bring these family traditions to my restaurant offerings and will do so at Farmhouse Market also."

RCA: You obviously have had great training and experience in creating wonderful menu offerings. What is your background and experience in this area?

Chef Vince: "Though I have no 'formal' training, I have been extremely fortunate to have worked with many world renowned chefs, including Chef Jean Pierre Briehier, The Left Bank, Ft. Lauderdale FL, and G.G. Romano, who ran both Papparazzi's in NYC, and La Tavernetta in Tamarac, FL."

RCA: Please describe your vision for how Farmhouse Market will serve the West Rabun Community.

Chef Vince: "Farmhouse Market will be a new phase in my culinary career, as we bring the experience gained in the fine dining described above to serve the 'on the go' needs of this area! With an extensive offering of 'grab and go' meals for Breakfast and Lunch ready to eat on location or take out, we intend to deliver a higher quality meal than others in the area can offer and at reasonable prices."

"These in addition to prepared Dinners for singles, couples or for a party of four will also be available Six Days a Week! Just take it home, pop it in the oven and just like that you have dinner for the family! Also, as we move into next spring, we would expect to have full dinner offering available for advance order placement when serving a full

house for several nights. All you have to do is stop by and pick it up each afternoon! We also intend to greatly expand our Catering operations for larger groups! And no less important to this side of Rabun County, we will have a fully stocked convenience store, with all the staples and items that we so frequently need and do not want to make a trip to Clayton to pick up!"

RCA: Vince, we suspect everyone reading this will be excited about what you are doing and wish you great success in Farmhouse Market Lake Burton!!

A NEW LAKE BURTON HISTORY BOOK

Novelist Mike Maffett will tell you anything you'd ever hope to know about the history of Lake Burton, the upper Tallulah River, every hike within a 30-mile radius of Clayton, Georgia, and his wife's middle name. And now he has crafted a book which summarizes the history of Lake Burton way beyond what you might have considered asking him, titled *Our Southern Eden, A Centennial History of Lake Burton and the Upper Tallulah Basin*.

For three long years, Maffett has tasked himself with penning a 65,000-word manuscript chronicling the rich history of Lake Burton. In addition to the creative writing, Maffett has painstakingly gathered countless exhibits of personal testimony, maps, charts and vintage photographs for inclusion in the hardback. For those unfamiliar with the lake, this means very little. But for others who've summered on her shoreline since childhood, or discovered Burton's pristine emerald waters along life's journey, Maffett's book can only be referred to as a long-awaited gift to her disciples.

Maffett's book is a first. Its pages will concentrate solely on Lake Burton's history, physicality, her people, and the greater legacy to America's Southeast at large. Most locals, repeat visitors and homeowners know the basics: humans were involved. Cities needed power, and rural places like Tallulah Gorge with thundering waterfalls, had it. For hydro-electric aficionados of the day, it was a match made in heaven.

Maffett's book digs further into lesser known details and the personal stories behind the facts. Lake Burton Dam was completed in 1920. A quiet valley braced itself, and started to fill. Confused river water had no place to go but up.

Maffett has crafted a masterpiece re-telling of this impressive yet melancholy story. In a fantastic stroke of good luck for Lake Burton's devoted, the book is due to publish spring 2020; just in time for the lake's centennial. Though it's changed much since her humble beginnings of a remote fisherman's paradise, passion for the lake has remained unabated through the decades.

And Maffett himself is Lake Burton born and bred. An Atlanta native, he was but 12 years old when his father bought into a small cabin at the north end of the lake. Phil Maffett's share of the property set him back \$1,000. A pinch more if you throw in annual property taxes of seven dollars. Back then, Lake Burton's target market were those high on nature, light on cash. Atlanta's monied elite had flocked to Lake Rabun with its closer proximity to the city, trains and other means of civilized transportation. By comparison, Burton was wild.

Maffett, a retired physician, cuts a tall figure of affability and calm. "I see the upper Tallulah Basin as a special, if not unique place, from both a natural history perspective and in the history of our nation." But why would any author spend exhaustive hours writing and gathering content on a project, then refuse any form of compensation? All book profits, in fact, will be donated to the Lake Burton Civic Association Foundation at Maffett's behest.

The author wants people to understand that Burton was on the



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Happy Thanksgiving

Merry Christmas Happy New Year



Lake Burton Civic Association has kicked off the restoration of "BIG RED," a 1948 pump truck that served locally until 1997. Since then, the truck has been parked at Mountain Patrol's office on Burton Dam Road. Initial assessment of condition has begun, with the goal of restoring the truck to original 1948 condition in time for next year's Burton Centennial festivities.

forefront of the pioneer movement at a highly transitional time. He insisted most area lake lovers truly don't understand the impact Lake Burton played in Atlanta's growth and rebirth of the south. Like the rest of rural America, before modern technology and electricity seeped through farmlands and backroads, people were quite literally in the dark. "When the sun went down," Maffett explained, "the day was over."

The keepsake book Maffett has written will be professionally designed and published by Shock Design out of Atlanta. In short, the book will be gorgeous. Coordinating with other centennial products and activities around the lake summer 2020, look to purchase Maffett's book at both La Prade's Marina and Anchorage Boat Dock, stores in Clayton and of course, on the Lake Burton Civic Association website. LBCA believed in the project from the start. Its board of directors decided to financially underwrite the endeavor, ensuring the manuscript saw the light of day.

As we sat on Mike and Beaty's back porch talking, we watched the sun break through a loitering cloud bank left over from a recent rain. "I want people to share my insights," Maffett said, wistfully petting the lounging dog curled up by his side. "And for future generations to not forget what this personal Eden represents."

Our Southern Eden will soon be available for pre-order via the LBCA website at www.lbca.net. The book will have a fabric cover and will contain 243 pages and 339 photos in a coffee table style format. The book will cover the prehistory and subsequent history of the Lake, the lost town of Burton, and surrounding communities. The final price of the book has not been formalized but is expected to in the \$70 to \$80 range. *Edited and updated from a long article developed by the Lake Burton Civic Association*

SHERIFF'S REPORT

One of the things I have tried to do since being elected Sheriff is to utilize technology to improve our efficiency and communication. We now have laptop workstations in every patrol vehicle that allow deputies to do incident reports, accident reports, and issue citations straight from their vehicle. These laptop workstations are serviced by Verizon Aircards, and when deputies are in an area with no service, our reporting system continues to allow the reports to be completed and uploaded once service is regained. We also upgraded our radios, allowing for better coverage and transmitting ability in our mountainous setting. At the Detention Center, we have started video visitation, which allows inmates to remotely visit with friends and families.

I am most excited about our next advancement in technology that is just for you, the citizens of Rabun County! We are pleased to announce that we now have our own free smartphone app available for mobile devices. The app has been in the works for almost a year, and has just launched. Search for "Rabun Sheriff" in your device's App Store, Play Store, etc. (store name may vary on Android devices). Information available on the app includes inmate search, inmate visitation rules and schedules, sex offender registry, submit tips, Sheriff's Office divisions, our event calendar, and even employment opportunities. We have also included an area within the app that describes different types of drugs, signs and symptoms of use, and resources for those seeking help to fight addiction. You will also be able to sign up to receive push notifications from the Sheriff's Office via the app. This is a brief overview of the app—I encourage you to take advantage of this free resource. It was created with you, our citizens in mind! Thanks for allowing me to serve as your Sheriff. I look forward to serving you for many years to come! Please have a safe and happy holiday season. *Sheriff Chad Nichols*