

SEASONS@BRL

2023 Roadway Improvements
The National Wildlife Federation honors BRL
Updating our Architectural Guidelines and Covenants
BRL Resources

Hello Summer! A serene snapshot of our river as the morning sunlight dances across the rushing water on the banks of our beautiful Lodge. A walk along our private stream can calm your mind and soothe your spirit as the cool, clean mountain air fills your lungs. Photo credit Jay Denman.

Bear River Lodge is Evolving

by Joy Coelho, Editor

A New Way to Connect

Welcome to the debut of *Seasons at Bear River Lodge*. This is our new digital quarterly community magazine where you can benefit by seeing and participating in what is happening in our unique forested river haven.

Seasons@BRL has been created in e-magazine format to be in perfect alignment with our green, eco-friendly BRL philosophy. This eliminates printing, wasting paper and also saving the cost of mailing it to you via snail mail.

Seasons@BRL wants to hear from you! Please share your favorite photos that capture what you love most about BRL.

Flora, fauna, and sweeping views that take your breath away can be featured in our upcoming editions. Feel free to share the inspiration you have been pondering for the dream home on your unique property.

And for our pioneer homeowners, please tell us about your gardens, wildlife sightings and the experience of living and thriving in this gorgeous corner of our planet! Please send your submissions to: SeasonsEditorBRL@Gmail.com

Roadway Renovations

In July the BRL main entry roadway and the Lodge parking area, which meets Riverview and Bear River Lodge trail, will be paved and upgraded. This paving includes the access area to our USPS mailbox installation.

The construction access road by the stables was revitalized in Spring. This road's renovation begins at SR 208 and spans to the Moonshiners Trail intersection and it is accessible from Bear River Lodge Trail.

Our BRL construction access road is compacted gravel, not asphalt. This gives our residents a safer exit and entry point during any unforeseen emergencies and mitigates the wear and tear on our new main entry road from construction equipment traffic.

We are so grateful for our Maintenance Committee, namely Dave Bell, Mike Foster, Kent Brooks, Tim Cone and the Board of Directors who facilitated this much anticipated wish to finally come true.

BRL Becoming a Nationally Certified Wildlife Preserve

On April 20, 2023 our Bear River Lodge Community was **registered** by the National Wildlife Federation and the North Carolina Wildlife Federation as a **Community Wildlife Habitat**. As a participant in this nationwide project the BRLCA is now recognized as mindful stewards of our natural wooded habitat and wild riparian waterway. *We will be the first Community in Madison County to accomplish this designation.*

BRL has successfully met the initial criteria to be **nationally registered as a wildlife preserve**. We still have a bit to do to become **fully certified** and those requirements should be met over the remaining Summer months.

One task on deck is our **Rise & Shine River Clean Up on September 16th (10am-noon)** and our **NWF Certification Celebration** at the Lodge with state, local and NWF officials slated to award BRL with our official status tentatively scheduled for October 1st at 7pm. *(continued on page 3)*



COMMUNITY WILDLIFE
HABITATTM



*Photo credits from the NWF website of the photo contest winners- 1st Place (Hummingbird) by Soo Baus & 2nd Place (Black Bear) by Sarah Koonce.

The National Wildlife Federation is America's largest conservation organization operating for over 45 years. There are several phases that are required in becoming a certified Community Wildlife Habitat by the NWF. Currently BRL has completed the registration goals, one of which is creating and successfully ratifying an ecological proclamation with local government.

BRL chose to submit an ecological proclamation that supports our natural biodiversity on many levels. We chose to support our native pollinators and their significant role in the food production and in maintaining plant health for our whole western North Carolina ecosystem.

We are proud to report that on June 13, 2023 the Madison County Commissioners ratified Bear River Lodge's proclamation designating the Month of June, in all of Madison County and especially in in BRL, to be "Native Pollinator Habitat Awareness Month." The new countywide resolution is designed to inspire education and activities for all Madison residents to mindfully support our smallest residents, namely our native bees, hummingbirds and butterflies in their landscaping, gardening and outdoor activities. The proclamation was signed, sealed and now is displayed in both our Lodge and in the Madison County Government Offices.

You will find more educational information and a list of native plants to add to your property that will attract and support our pollinators: bit.ly/43afIS2 . This second link offers you a wealth of information about understanding and identifying our native bee neighbors: bit.ly/3NCSedl .

Supporting North Carolina's over 500 distinctive native bee species helps to stand in the gap where the imported honey bee populations have been collapsing at an alarming rate in every state. Bear River Lodge is working to maintain a healthy, sustainable and wildlife friendly community that fosters better connections between humans and wildlife.

On June 13, 2023 the Madison County Commissioners ratified the Bear River Lodge's proclamation that the Month of June in all of Madison County and especially in in BRL to be Pollinator Awareness and Protection Month. The new countywide resolution is to encourage and educate residents to mindfully support our smallest residents, namely our native bees, hummingbirds and butterflies.



Vice Chairman Michael Garrison, BRL Director Joy Coelho, Chairman Matthew Wechtel, BRL President Dave Wellendorf, Commissioner Jeremy Hensley & Commissioner Alan Wyatt

Your Vote is Your Voice

The BRLCA regulations which govern the look of our homes, the building materials to be used, the rules to maintain our peace and quiet and our community philosophies are in the midst of being brought up to date. They are now 20 years old and are set to self-renew in 2024 if left unaddressed.

Known as our Covenants & Restrictions (C & Rs) along with our Architectural Guidelines, both should align with the contemporary needs of our property and homeowners, as well as the new technologies and materials that have become available in the last two decades. Vetting these new materials and presenting forward-thinking ideas benefit each one of us directly and therefore our community as a whole.

Mindfully tailoring these important documents to meet our current housing style and community standards will safeguard our property values, preserve our natural habitat and leave a great legacy for our future.

As your Board of Directors research, address and update each portion of the C & Rs we need to hear your voice and have you vote to adopt these improvements and updates that will become our official governing documents going forward. The Board has wisely retained a North Carolina law firm, who has experience and expertise in this undertaking, for legal guidance and assistance for this critical project.

You will be contacted in writing, via email and/or USPS mail directly, to review the updates so you may cast your vote for the implementation of our C & Rs as they are updated. Your participation as a member in good standing in this process is vitally important in this monumental task.

In order to update the C & Rs, it is required that 67% of our members in good standing officially vote them into being, otherwise the antiquated document that the original developer left behind will stand as it is. The Architectural Guidelines will be honed to reflect and work in concert with the new 2023 C & Rs. The Board of Directors have rolled up their sleeves and are already doing this tedious work in order to present you with polished and legally sound regulations for you to vote upon.

We wish to Thank You for actively participating in this important part of our Bear River Lodge history.

Dave Wellendorf, President
Jason Goldstein, Vice President
Mike Foster, Secretary
Joy Coelho, Director
Kent Brooks, Director





You will see this handiwork as soon as you pull up to our main gate. Our big BRL entry sign and keypad was hand painted with care and restored to its original luster. The keypad also got a clever solar light upgrade.

We are all truly grateful for these lovely transformations thanks to these special folks- Sylvia Bell, Dave Bell and Kent Brooks. You can certainly feel proud to belong to a collective of such caring neighbors here in BRL.

Photo credit Kent Brooks & Joy Coelho

Spruced Up for Summer

It turns out that the perfect recipe for rejuvenated street signs is old school elbow grease, sweat equity, and a real love for the place you call home.

Our neighborhood signs just enjoyed a beautiful make over in spring at the dedicated hands of some of our own wonderful residents.

The original sign post arms also got a much needed arm lift. These heavy timber crossbeams had drooped over time and they now stand straight as they hold our beautiful rustic signs.





DID YOU KNOW

How to Bring Your Mountain Home to Life

by Joy Coelho

As a property owner do you know what important steps you need to take to build your BRL dream home from scratch? Here are some important pointers from this writer and other residents who have successfully navigated the process. Your due diligence will expedite the process so your contractor can hit the ground running and save you time, money and headaches. See Page 9 for ALL the resources mentioned in each step.

1-YOUR LAND- It doesn't matter if you bought your lot recently or years ago, and especially if it was purchased sight unseen, ***you should put on your hiking shoes and visit your land.*** Incorporate the visit to your property into your family vacation plans or choose a long weekend in the mountains. Knowing the unique contours and topography of your new prospective haven will help you determine the best location for your home's footprint. Did you know that you can stay right in BRL at your choice of available vacation homes for instant and convenient access to your property during your visit in lieu of a distant hotel room? See Page 9 for available vacation lodging inside your Bear River Lodge neighborhood.

Walking your property, watching the sunset and sunrise and how the sun illuminates your lot is the first step. It will give you a sense of what is possible and the best placement options of the house seat for views and functionally. Your visit will also immerse you in the feel of your unique community and amenities. You will see firsthand the finished homes your neighbors have manifested from dream to reality and garner some real inspiration. Familiarize yourself with the BRL Architectural Guidelines, and the Covenants & Restrictions so you are aware of the perimeters of your build. <https://www.brlca.com/documents/>

2- YOUR SURVEY- Having your land surveyed and physically staked so that you have a clear visual picture of your property lines is exciting. This step is key for forming a successful site plan and for facilitating the required placement of your well, septic and septic repair. You can chose a local surveyor or your General Contractor can handle this step too.

3- YOUR SEPTIC- Where does it "perk"? A certified soil scientist will identify exactly where your septic and septic repair field must be installed. Property that does not properly perk may require an alternative system to be engineered and installed to match the number of bedrooms in your dream home. Permits for septic systems on vacant land that were acquired years ago may have become expired. It is required to have current and accurate permits. Madison County Environmental Services Department issues septic permits. See page 9.

4- YOUR WATER/WELL- Every home in BRL has their own well. Not having a monthly water bill and being able to drink clean mountain water is a healthy luxury. This writer personally hired a professional dowsing to find the best spots to drill. We hit our water source on the first go. Be mindful of all county setbacks from the septic and property lines. He gave all of this information to us in writing including the expected depth and flow of the well. His forecast was right and we were very happy. This is an optional step.

5-YOUR BUILDER- Choosing a local General Contractor with *a good reputation and track record* is the most important decision in this process. It doesn't matter if you have chosen your house plans from a website or if you have an architect designing a fully custom home, the mindful execution is all in the hands of your contractor. **Really take your time**, see the homes that they have completed and check their reputation with the Madison County Building Department and your new neighbors. *Your GC must understand and follow our Architectural Guidelines and C & R building requirements.*

6-PERMITS & SUBMISSION-Now you have your ducks in a row but- *FIRST YOU MUST SUBMIT YOUR PLANS to the BRLCA Architectural Committee to get approval from the BRLCA Board of Directors after they receive the Architectural Committee's recommendations.*

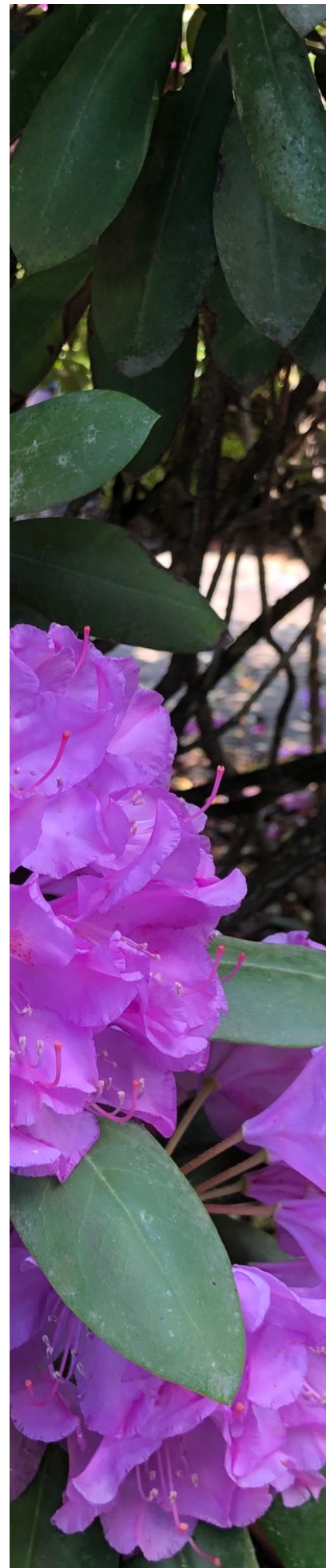
Please review the full Submission Requirements in the Architectural Guidelines and become familiar with the C & R requirements so that your build request submission package is complete with color choices, site plan, grading plan etc.

7-APPROVAL- Upon BRL Board of Directors approval, your contractor can file for your required building permits. If you have already received the soil scientist's septic plan, and you have a completed site plan which includes the check list from the ARC Guidelines, your contractor will be ahead of the game.

Good Luck and we look forward to meeting you, neighbor!

DID YOU KNOW- Info for Current Home Owners!

If you are going to be away from your BRL home for 30 days or more you can save on the Fiber Optic portion of your bill by calling French Broad Customer Service at 828 649 2051 and having them pause just your fiber service for the dates that you will be gone. There is no charge to pause the service or to reconnect the service. This service doesn't require any technicians to come out, it is all accomplished on the phone. You may do this once a year.



Current Opportunities
New Land &
Two Home Sales



BRL Resources

Vacation Destination BRL

The locations listed are featured on Airbnb & VRBO and are individually owned and operated Vacation Homes in BRL

*SkyView Mountain Retreat & River Haven at RiverDance-
www.RiverDanceNC.com or (847) 809 3098

*Water's Edge Cabin-
<https://www.vrbo.com/410179>

*Wildcat Cove Mountain Home-
<https://www.vrbo.com/2655327>

*Mountain OverLook BlueRidge Retreat
<https://www.vrbo.com/1175018>

Helpful Links

Bear River Lodge Website:
<https://www.brlca.com>

BRL Architectural Guidelines and Covenants & Restrictions:
<https://www.brlca.com/documents/>

Madison County Environmental Services Department (Septic & Well):
<https://www.madisoncountyhealth.org/environmental-health.html>

The next Seasons@BRL e-magazine will be delivered October 2023.
Issue Number 2 - "2023 Holiday Edition"

Please send ALL submissions and inquiries to- SeasonsEditorBRL@Gmail.com
Editor Joy Coelho, BRLCA Board of Directors

Deadline for 2023 Holiday Edition - September 1, 2023 5pm EST