



Mission Statement

The mission of SRA is to help sustain the natural beauty of the Riceville Valley while supporting a sense of community.

Riceville Advocate

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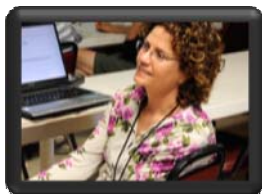
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Recent Events

Native Plants Program A Hit

On May 5 Jeanie Martin, Riceville Forest resident, SRA



Coordinating Team member, and among MANY things, a naturalist and avid gardener, talked about using native plants in our gardens.

The program covered:

- What native plants grow well where
- How best to use native plants

One lucky attendee took home a potted native plant.

Flint Knapping with John Preston

On February 24 John Preston, an archeologist, gave a great talk about arrowheads and other archeological finds in the Riceville Valley. A good-sized crowd also watched John’s flint knapping demonstration.



“A Year in The Life of A Bear “ was presented on July 7 at the Riceville Community Center. The fascinating narrated slide

presentation was presented by Appalachian Bear Rescue (ABR), a wildlife conservation organization. We learned about these native neighbors by following them through their activities month by month. ABR’s mission is to rehabilitate orphaned and injured bears and to educate the public about black bears and the regional threats facing them.

For photos of these recent events, see the SRA website.



Nature Corner – Jeanie Martin

My dog Bonnie and I were hiking recently and encountered a slow hiker coming down the trail. It was an eastern box turtle, and Bonnie’s curiosity resulted in this turtle showing one of her key characteristics, a hinged plastron (underside of the shell) and the ability to close her shell completely to exclude predators. I knew this turtle was a female as her shell was more domed than the males’, and before Bonnie so rudely sniffed her I saw that she had a short tail and her eyes were brown. Most males have bright orange or red eyes and longer, thicker tails than females. Male plastrons are also concave in the rear.

Box turtles can be found in various habitats in Riceville from wooded areas to grassy fields but prefer moist woods with thick underbrush. They spend most of their lives within an area 750’ in diameter. They are not aquatic but can be seen wading in a puddle or the edge of a creek in hot weather. In the winter they hibernate by burrowing into loose soil. Their diet includes insects, frogs, salamanders, snakes, bird eggs, berries, vegetable matter, mushrooms, flowers, and carrion.

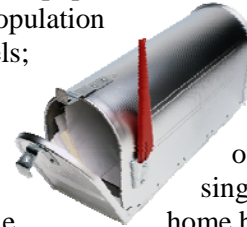
When a box turtle hatches out of its shell it is about 1.25 inches long. The young are rarely seen and live their early years in dense undergrowth feeding mostly on insects. They reach sexual maturity at 7-10 years of age and 5-6 inches long. The female will lay 3-6 eggs in a shallow, unguarded nest in the spring, and the young hatch in the late summer. Females lay hundreds of eggs over their lifetime but only 2-3 of their offspring reach sexual maturity. Box turtles can live easily up to 60 years of age.

Although still fairly common, box turtles are suffering from habitat destruction and fragmentation and capture for the pet trade. They are also hit by cars, tractors and lawn mowers. If you see a box turtle in the road, move it to the side it was traveling to and know that you may have just saved a Riceville elder.

Points of View – Bob Sigmon

21st-Cent Neighborhoods and the Riceville Community

In what ways will neighborhoods be defined in the 21st century? Marshall Silver, an urban design planner, recently led a workshop in Asheville on this question. He noted that the U.S. population is now more diverse; North Carolina’s population is growing at unprecedented levels; Buncombe County may add another 40-50,000 residents over the next couple of decades; over half of the households will be single parent lead or single people; single home building designs will flourish; and as the baby boomers age we will see enormous pressure for more density in the county.



How will Riceville grow and develop? 21st century neighborhoods, as seen by Mr. Silver, will require good roads; public transport; more density; village centers with shops and places for residents to gather; open spaces such as parks; smaller houses; and ways for residents to share their stories and dreams.

The Riceville area has many assets in its natural and human resources. In the Riceville Fire District there are over 4,000 registered voters, and the numbers are growing as more housing development occurs. Single family homes are the norm. We enjoy the open spaces, pastures, clear streams, the mostly green slopes and ridge tops. We have been gifted this beautiful place by the choice of those who have lived here over the past 200 years to preserve open space, slopes and ridges in their natural state. We have a first-rate fire department, but no other public entities or anything resembling a village center where we can meet and greet.

As we look ahead as individuals and as a unique geographic community bounded by the national park, a national forest, Warren Wilson College and close access to the vibrancy of Asheville, in what ways will we individually and collectively help shape Riceville as a 21st century group of neighborhoods?

I can envision the Riceville Fire Department Board, the Riceville Community Center Board, the four church board leaders, the homeowners association leaders; small business leaders; and the Scenic Riceville Advocates coming together to explore what they would like to see us look like as we change over the next

couple of decades. I can envision small clusters of individuals intentionally choosing to talk about what a 21st century neighborhood could be in our area.

As these conversations take place, my hunch is that creative processes and actions will emerge that will help sustain the beauty of this distinctive valley while at the same time creating a sense of community that we all can be proud of and enjoy. Or will we wait until something like the huge development in Swannanoa hits our area and only then, urgently, begin to explore our futures?

Residents' Thoughts About The Future

This space in the newsletter is open to points of view related to what we see emerging as the 21st century Riceville neighborhood. To contribute your "Thoughts About The Future" send them to joyce@scenicricevilleadvocates.org or write to PO Box 9003, Asheville, NC, 28815-0003.

Riceville Historical Notes

Riceville's history holds a few stories I have been told about how the community has come together to deal with common concerns.

- After the Civil War, families came together to help create a school for their children. A.M. Penland from Rheems Creek came over to help start a school with the help of a Presbyterian Mission Board.
- The churches were gathering places for dinners on the grounds, singing, and just getting together as well as for regular worship services. Each church invited members of the other churches to these social functions.
- Over 60 years ago, the Men's Club of the valley created the goodwill and energy to get a fire department going. The Riceville Fire Department and the Riceville Community Center grew out of those communal efforts.
- When TVA wanted to dam up the Swannanoa River nearby, folks here joined with others in the valley to preserve the land from the TVA hopes.

- I am told that worries persist about the county creating a water reservoir along Shope Creek and that there needs to be some vigilance against any actions that might revive that project.
- I have heard complaints that the community went to sleep when the Parkway was built by not insisting on keeping an access open at the end of Bull Creek over to the Weaverville area.
- There are many more stories of how the Riceville community has or has not come together to work to improve the conditions of its members. This space welcomes other stories of how individuals and groups have come together to deal with communal concerns.

To share more stories contact

joyce@scenicricevilleadvocates.org or send them to PO Box 9003, Asheville, NC, 28815-0003.

Presbyterian Church Welcomes New Pastor

Rev. Chris Wingard has recently been called to pastor the congregation of Riceville Presbyterian Church. His first Sunday in the pulpit was July 5, 2009.

Rev. Wingard, who received his Master of Divinity degree from Columbia Seminary in 1998, has previously served two churches. He was the associate pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Fernandina Beach, FL, and served as pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Lancaster, SC.

Rev. Wingard and his wife Marnie have two children—Hannah and Camden. The family moved to the Asheville area in 2006 so that Marnie could pursue her nursing career. While searching for his next calling, Rev. Wingard taught history and coached at North Buncombe High School.

Church services are held at 11 a.m. at Riceville every week with Sunday School at 10 a.m. Everyone is welcome.

The Old Riceville Post Offices



The Clark house was the first home in Riceville to have a telephone and was

one of two post offices that serviced the community. The post office was alternated as the political climate changed between the Clark house (Republicans) and the Stevenson house (Democrats). The Clark house is still standing; it is now used for farm storage and kept as a reminder of days gone by. The area at the right side of the building where the siding is missing is believed to be where the post office mailbox bins were installed.

Gladys Ray lives in the Stevenson home pictured below. Gladys used to live in the old Clark house. She still has



the original post master book from the late 1800's. Mail arrived semi-weekly by horse-

back. It is said that riders would drop mail at the Stevenson house on their way across Bull Gap heading on to Rheems Creek. First E. F. Clark and then A.L. Stevenson were the postmasters. The Riceville Post Office was established August 28, 1876 and was discontinued March 31, 1906.

Business News

The SRA Coordinating Team continues to meet to discuss goals, new ideas, projects, and other possibilities. Anyone wishing to participate is welcome. Meeting schedules are posted under

“Events” on our website. Please email joyce@scenicricevilleadvocates.org to let us know you are coming.



Land Tips

Worried about protecting land? Sometimes the use of covenants can work effectively.

Case Study #1: Some owners have purchased their property agreeing to covenants that limit how many and what kinds of structures can be built. A 15-30 year time period is usually defined. This option is available to anyone selling property to another individual. Real estate agents and attorneys are familiar with how to include these kinds of covenants in the selling of property.

For more photos and information check out the SRA website www.scenicricevilleadvocates.org.

The Riceville Advocate is a community-base, collaborative newsletter edited by SRA. Story content represents the work of the individual contributors. Submissions are encouraged. Submissions accepted for publication may be edited for length and form.