



Top of Georgia Tornado Recovery

Today marks one month since the EF1 tornado ripped through our beloved Top of Georgia. A lot of cleanup and tree removal is behind us now, but there is still a lot more to do. We had a number of Airstreams in the park last week during what would have been our Spring Rally, and everyone worked hard around the park. Our call for folks to bring their lawn rakes was a big success and all of the grass areas and parking spaces were raked to gather the twigs and branches that were

everywhere. We then were able to get the riding lawn mowers out and get the grass cut throughout the park. It's really starting to look much better. One of the hardest hit areas was down around the fire pit area. Several folks cut, stacked and burned huge piles of debris in that area and it is also looking better. There are still large trees down along and across Andrews Creek, but since the tractor ramp was destroyed we don't have the ability to get equipment in there yet. The trail from the Cove and across the foot bridge was opened up and we started pulling debris out of the creek below the bridge.

Other teams emptied the tractor shed, the offices, the attic, and the maintenance building in preparation for demolition to begin. The John Deere tractor and Big Red, our huge flatbed trailer, have been in constant use hauling away trash and debris. It's amazing how much junk we have accumulated over the years! Last Tuesday the insurance adjuster and an engineer came to the park to observe the building damage that they couldn't inspect before the trees were removed. We should soon get reports on our coverages and probable payouts. Once we have that we can prioritize what to rebuild and where to begin. There is a real possibility that we may not be able to restore every building to its original condition. I see this as an opportunity to reassess our needs and make any changes that make sense as we move forward. As I said before, we are looking forward to a new, improved Top of Georgia.

The costs continue to mount for infrastructure repairs, but we are getting close to having it done. The water system is restored. The electric is back on in the upper park and in the main pavilion. The cable service is operating but we may still have some underground breaks along the upper creek side. We should be able to open the road side of the B section very soon but the Pine Shelter is still off limits. We are getting quotes for stump removal and concrete work and that will be the next step in cleaning up the grounds. We are also starting to receive bids on building demolition and reconstruction.

I am so impressed with our loyal members. A lot of people love this park as evidenced by both their hard work and their amazing generosity. Donations are coming in almost daily and are very much appreciated. More is needed so please don't stop. I estimate that we have incurred nearly \$25,000 in costs so far that will not be covered by insurance. Any amount you can give will help.

Because we didn't have our Spring Rally we didn't have our business meeting either. The business meeting will now be held on May 26th, the Saturday morning of the Memorial Day Rally. This is the official thirty day notice for that meeting as required by the unit's bylaws.

Finally, I'm inviting you to come to the park. We have plenty of full service sites available. If you want to work there are things to be done, but if you just want to relax and see how far we've come in a month then that's okay too. As John Muir so elegantly stated, "The mountains are calling and I

must go". So please come. We'll be waiting for you.

Bill Wild
President

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