

Down but never out – the continuing recovery at the Top

We had an uninvited visitor at the Top last Wednesday. Tropical Storm Alberto passed through the North Georgia Mountains leaving nearly 10" of rainfall. As that water raced down Trey Mountain on its way to the Chattahoochee much of it passed through Andrews Creek and the Top of Georgia. Unfortunately, the raging water also brought huge amounts of debris left behind from the March tornado. That debris created several natural dams as it gathered around fallen trees in the creek. The largest one was just behind the pavilion and was as high as the creek bank. Water always takes the easiest path, and that path was directly through the maintenance and office building and the main pavilion. We ended up with over four inches of mud in the breezeway behind the kitchen, and a slimy coating of muddy water in the board room, kitchen, library, and much of the main hall. And as it rushed southward through the picnic area it washed away most of the woodchips that had just been placed there during the Memorial Day rally.

Our co-property managers, Al Holcomb and Edgar Williamson, quickly assessed the damage and called Service Master for a quote and availability. The quote was reasonable, but they couldn't come for two weeks. Meanwhile, the word of our second disaster in less than three months spread and once again our faithful volunteers rushed to the Top and we began the cleanup ourselves. They scooped up the mud with the John Deere and moved it to washout spots around the park. Next came the power washer followed by the sweepers and squeegee crew. By Thursday evening the main building was restored. Friday they tackled the old offices and the board room. The muddy carpet was removed and several boxes of old (really old) registration slips were moved to the trash pile. Because they contained personal data, the Crowes started a bonfire in the fire pit and spent the day feeding and tending it. And finally, since the floor was now clear of mud and furniture, Neil Warren brought his concrete cleaning attachment and cleaned the floors to a beautiful finish that hasn't been seen for years.

While all of that was going on, a separate crew attacked the large dam. With chainsaw and tractor they spent all day Thursday disassembling a natural structure that would have made any beaver proud. Little by little they opened small channels until finally they pulled a crucial log and cheered as half of the dam disintegrated and rushed downstream. Over the next few minutes the upper water level dropped by over two feet. They finished just as the next 3" of rain came, satisfied that this time the bank wouldn't overflow.

Unrelated to the flooding, I am also pleased to report that the Daniels Company crew continued working on the building repairs as we cleaned up around them. The new steel is in on the main pavilion and they are working on the gables. The roof has been replaced as needed on the front side and the back is tarped to protect us from further damage. The center sections of the roof on the maintenance building have been removed and the new trusses are going in. We are hoping that both buildings will be closed in and dry by the Summer Youth/Buddy rally.

This coming week Barbara and I are headed to International in Salem, Oregon, where we will proudly represent the Georgia Unit and share our story of misfortune and recovery with the whole club. While there I will also be installed as the 2nd Vice President of Region 3. We are very excited about being able to continue serving the club at this new level, but never forgetting that our home is here with you.

Bill Wild
President