

The Save Chilhowee Mountain mission is to preserve the natural habitat, beauty, and diversity of the Chilhowee Mountain area for the enjoyment of all.

Who are we?

Save Chilhowee Mountain is made up of a very diverse group of people. We are both local and from various places across the country, and have different ideas. What unites us is a love for the Chilhowee Mountains and for preserving them. We feel that The Overlook at Montvale and other such ridge top developments will profoundly and irrevocably change Blount County's rural character and quality of life.

We did not sell out!

We made a record setting agreement.

We at Save Chilhowee Mountain, Inc. or SCM, are rolling up our sleeves for the work ahead. Our record-setting agreement with Harmony property Group resolved the lawsuits we filed against them alleging violations of local, state and federal laws. The settlement commits Harmony to **take real steps to protect the surface and ground water quality of Great Smoky Mountains National Park and of the adjacent Happy Valley home-owners.** The settlement enables both parties to move forward with their differing agendas.

An unusual and important provision of the settlement, however, **commits both parties to work together to tighten up the zoning and land-use regulations** that the County Planning Commission is supposed to enforce. SCM's objective in that joint effort will be to make sure that **no ridge-top development or high density development on a steep mountainside is ever again approved by Planning Commission.**

In talks over the next few weeks we hope to find that Harmony has similar, or compatible, objectives. We hope our relationship with Harmony, wholly adversarial until now, will become more cooperative, just as our settlement agreement anticipates.

With or without the cooperation of Harmony, however, SCM takes this occasion-----following that historic settlement----to recommit to its fundamental objective: development of the Chilhowee community **must and will proceed only through projects that recognize and preserve the historically wild and rural nature of this area.** We will work to preserve access to these lands for all people, regardless of wealth or position.

Join us for a fundraiser

Sisters Of The Silver Sage



Jay Clark

Others to be announced

July 20, 2007

7pm

at THE SHED

**Smoky Mountain Harley
Hwy 321**

Happy Summertime Everyone!

With the recent rains, the greening up of the forests has camouflaged a lot of damage that has been done in recent months to our unique and important mountain ridge, Chilhowee Mountain. A lot of you may not know, but Chilhowee Mountain is over 80 miles long and stretches from Polk Co. in the south to Sevier Co. to the north (technically it goes all the way past Chattanooga and into Alabama...). It's the main bulwark to the western side of the Southern Appalachians and creates a natural buffer to the various kinds of developments that are quickly gobbling up the natural habitat and beauty of East Tennessee. For scientists it is a marvel and hundreds of college students come here every year to learn about its ancient geology. These are some of the oldest mountains on earth. Unfortunately, bulldozers can destroy in hours what it has taken God millions of years to create.

But you know the bears and the birds and the deer aren't the only thing being threatened here. Our **biggest industry is tourism**, and without our scenic resources that part of our economy could disappear as well. Tourism is a wonderful way for us to have our cake and eat it too. Tourists support all sorts of area business from restaurants and hotels, to outfitters and guides. But the vitality of that industry requires that we steward the land carefully to insure its sustainability. We are blessed with magnificent vistas that are available to all just for the looking. **We cannot and will not stand by while all this beauty is fouled by thoughtlessness and greed.** Even the views from inside the park are being degraded by high density subdivisions that are being carved into Chilhowee's eastern and western slopes, not to mention the ridge tops themselves.

We have recently negotiated a settlement with one of these developers, and we are hoping to build a long and productive working relationship with them. Well intended **people on their side and ours will be able to work together to minimize the impact on water quality both below and above ground.** We hope this collaboration will result new and innovative ideas to prevent over-commercialization of Chilhowee mountain and the nearby foothills in the future. The economic pressures that we are faced with are vast and well financed. Save Chilhowee Mountain see's as its primary goal to push back at rampant sprawl and un-restricted and ill-conceived development.

As we have gained support and membership from a constantly growing group of diverse citizens, both who live here and who come from far away to experience the natural beauty here, we've begun to build a list of compelling issues that we must address in order to truly protect the legacy our ancestors have handed down to us. Here are a few in no particular order:

- Development of ridge tops should not be allowed within 1000' of such ridge tops.
- The make-up of the Planning Commission should be limited to no more than 20% developers and others who have a vested interest in unrestricted development.
- Zoning discipline -This means the Planning Commission of our counties and cities must adhere to their own regulations. It is not their job to make developers rich.
- Mountainside septic systems must not threaten ground water.
- The integrity of our Appalachian streams and waterways must be protected.
- County growth as a whole should use quality growth guide lines that are already widely accepted around the county.
- The Hunter Growth Study, which citizens paid over a 1/4 million dollars for, should be the guiding force that insures such quality growth.
- We need to educate ourselves on issues that impact greenspace and work to elect officials who respect the unreplaceable natural resources that we are losing daily.

These are just a few of the issues that we as an organization will be working on. **We welcome everyone** that has similar vision and we welcome passionate discussion about these issues as well as others as they become obvious parts in this giant puzzle that challenges us all here in East Tennessee.

SCM is awarded a World Wildlife Fund grant

The World Wildlife Fund has been an early supporter of the work of Save Chilhowee Mountain by awarding the organization a \$5,000 grant from WWF's Southeastern Rivers and Streams Support Fund. The goals of the one-year grant are:

1. To reduce damage to Abrams Creek caused by actual and potential development on the slopes of Chilhowee Mountain.
2. Specifically to mitigate/reduce damage resulting from development of Montvale Overlook,
3. To hold all parties to development accountable for their commitments and actions, and
4. To develop a longer term strategic plan for Save Chilhowee Mountain beyond this initial challenge.

SCM also intends to produce other changes to improve the larger community in which we all live. We are working toward:

1. More knowledgeable elected and appointed bodies that will improve development standards for Blount County,
2. A marked improvement in enforcement of existing standards by regulatory bodies,
3. An increased sensitivity to environmental threats resulting from development pressures, and
4. An increased awareness of the critical importance of environmental quality on the long-term economic health of Blount County.

The \$5,000 will be used for four primary activities:

1. To monitor and engage regulatory and permitting agencies and their decisions regarding water quality and aquatic habitat,
2. TO develop a coalition of diverse partnerships,
3. To build the capacity of the organization (membership expansion, board development, strategic planning, etc.), and
4. Technical expertise in the form of ground water testing.

This grant is obviously important to our work, but we need your personal and financial support too. It will take our collective folkpower to protect Chilhowee Mountain, the water quality of the Abrams Creek watershed, and all of Blount County's natural resources. Please consider both becoming personally involved as a volunteer and making a financial investment in a better future for us all with a donation to Save Chilhowee Mountain.

To learn more about WWF's critical work with freshwater, go to <http://www.worldwildlife.org/freshwater/>

YOU CAN HELP

Contact your Blount County Officials to voice your concerns.

Blount County Mayor **Jerry Cunningham**
Blount County Courthouse (865) 273-5700
341 Court Street
Maryville, TN 37804-5906

Planning Commission **Jim Scully, Chairman**
(865) 380-9402
1023 Mystery Way
Maryville, TN 37803

Donations may be sent to **Save Chilhowee Mountain** P.O. Box 6559 Maryville, Tennessee 37802