

Stuart Highlands

Renters' Handbook

February, 2024

Welcome!

Welcome to the Stuart Highlands neighborhood! We hope that you will enjoy your stay in our lovely quiet mountain community.

In this handbook we provide some facts and suggestions to help ensure that you have a great visit and that your mountain neighbors will want to welcome you back again. We also detail several important community rules that exist for your protection and that of the community.

Sincerely,

The Stuart Highlands Property Owners Association



Know your location.

You may have selected the property you are visiting from a travel website or rental agency. You may think of it as "Cabin with a View" or whatever name the owner or rental agency have given it. However, should an emergency arise, local police and fire personnel will want to know the street address. So be sure you know the address should the need for help arise. Your cabin should have the address posted for easy access.



Enjoy your location.

It's fine to have a quiet hike with your dog or take a walk on the neighborhood streets, but please be a good neighbor when you do. What does that mean?

- Most houses in Stuart Highlands are **not** rentals; they are people's homes. That means when you walk up onto the porch to look in the windows you may see a resident. Surprise! You are now a Peeping Tom. So, please don't do that.
- Similarly, don't wander into someone's driveway or sit on their back porch because you think their view will be better than yours. [Yes, these things have happened…]
- And for sure if you are wandering about, don't leave cups, beer cans, cigarette butts, dog doo, or other unpleasant calling cards along your pathway.

- Last, dogs or any other pets you may be walking must be leashed and under your control. One loose-dog incident sent a resident to the hospital with a concussion, broken bones, and internal bleeding. If your pet leaves a calling card please "stoop and scoop", regardless of whether it is on your rental location, someone else's land, or on a walking path through the woods … just clean it up please.



Keep it down over there!

Please, be considerate about your noise levels. The neighborhood's quiet time starts at ten pm. But you should control the volume of your music or partying at all hours. Gunfire, fireworks, ATVs, and noisy motorcycles are not allowed in the neighborhood. Such noises along with unexplained screaming will draw unwanted attention such as a stop-in by your friendly north Georgia sheriff.

Remember, if you are partying hard and lose track of time, your neighbors likely will not lose track of you. This means the owner of the cabin you rented will get a call of complaint because you are their guest. The folks who own the cabin you rented don't want to get a call at 3 am, but they will if your partying wakes the neighbors.



Park appropriately.

You may have noticed that our roads are narrow and curvy here. They are *barely* two cars wide. They are also not well lit at night because we like it that way. This means if you park with your car half on the road you are taking a Big Risk of getting hit by someone who doesn't know his or her way around. Also, your car will be at risk of getting hit if a large emergency vehicle is needed in the neighborhood. Last, you are

also breaking a neighborhood rule against parking on the side of the street overnight.

So please park all cars in your cabin's driveway or elsewhere on its property. 

Fire!

You have heard that it is bad to yell "fire" in a crowded theatre. Well, we don't want anyone yelling "Fire!" out here in the woods either. And we REALLY don't want out-of-control fires here in the woods. Thus, we ask you to practice good fire hygiene if you use the fireplace or firepit at your rental home. What does this mean?

Inside fires: Open the flue. Do not use flammable liquids as fire starters. Know where the fire extinguisher is located and have it handy. Shut fire screens when the fire is burning.

Outdoor fires: Only light fires in approved fire pits or fireplaces, not in the middle of the cabin yard. Be sure to have a hose or shovel and fire extinguishing materials nearby [water, sand, etc.].

Any fire, anywhere: Do not leave ANY fire unattended. PUT OUT THE FIRE COMPLETELY when you are leaving it or going to bed. This means NO COALS OR EMBERS should be glowing. You may need to use water, sand, or fireplace tools to completely tamp out the coals. You should be able to put your hand on the coals when a fire is extinguished. DO NOT THROW WARM COALS INTO THE GARBAGE!!

You may think this is overkill. It is not. It is <u>incredibly</u> <u>important</u>. A home here burned to the ground after renters went to bed with embers still lit in the outdoor fireplace. A log rolled out and caught the wooden deck on fire. The fire spread, and the propane tank caught on fire. The home and tank burned for days and all the fire department could do was watch it burn.

Thankfully [perhaps miraculously] no one died, and no other homes were damaged, but you can believe THOSE renters are not allowed back here. More recently, alert

neighbors out for a walk discovered a fire that had started from hot coals thrown in the garbage bin of a rental cabin. See note above about that topic. So, remember what Smokey Bear taught us: Only YOU can prevent forest fires (and other fires, too).



That's a bunch of garbage!

While you are here you will likely eat, drink, and make garbage. Your cabin should provide instructions on where to place your garbage when leaving. But, what to do if you have more garbage than fits into the provided receptacles??! Oh no! It doesn't fit! Well, one thing you can do is take the excess garbage with you. Or call your rental agent and tell them you had to leave it inside the house.

Do NOT put plastic bags of garbage on top of or next to whatever outdoor garbage cans your cabin has provided, unless there is space inside of a bearproof outer box. Trash left unsecured will attract squirrels and raccoons, or worse yet, bears. It would be cool to see a bear, but leaving food for them means they will feel welcome. Then they will return when they are *really* hungry and we do not want that.

Finally should you see a bear, DO NOT APPROACH IT, do not throw food towards it, do not tease, poke, prod, vex, or otherwise irritate ANY bears. Bears are wildlife and deserve to stay that way. And you deserve to stay alive and uninjured.



Other wildlife

Our neighborhood is home to a variety of other wild creatures. Residents have seen bears, deer, fox, turkeys, and many other smaller birds. The mountains are also home to snakes, most of which are completely harmless. The main poisonous snakes of our

area are the copperhead and rattlesnake, pictured below. Most venomous snakes have triangular heads, and many have clear markings.

If you walk in the woods, you do so **at your own risk**. Always be aware of your surroundings. Most snakes would just as soon NOT interact with humans, but they will do so in an unpleasant way if they are attacked. For the curious, see several snake images below.

Should you get bitten by a poisonous snake, **go quickly and directly to seek emergency care**. Fannin General Hospital is about 7 miles away at 2855 Old Highway 5, Blue Ridge, GA 30513. [(706) 632-3711](). The most direct route there is through McCaysville. Or call 911.

Paul Fusco gives us this great shot of the northern copperhead. It too has bands, but its coloring is quite different from that of the other native snakes. https://portal.ct.gov/lib/deep/wildlife/images/outreach/fact_sheets/copperhead.jpg



Thanks to the site https://wildlifeinformer.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/timber-rattlesnake.jpg we see the timber rattler, with bands rather than diamond shaped shields along its length. Some may have an orangey or pinkish stripe as well. This snake can climb trees!



This is the eastern diamondback rattler. Note the distinctive shield shapes. Colors may vary to darker shades. Thanks for this photo go to https://volusianaturalist.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Crotalus-adamant_03022015-00_DeLand-IS-624x489.jpg.



This is the cottonmouth snake. The reason for its name is obvious. We credit the University of Georgia for this public domain photo.



Questions? Emergencies?

Your first line of information is through your rental agency. Police [sheriff] and fire can be reached via 911, or the non-emergency number for the sheriff is 706-632-2043 and for the fire department is 706-632-4711.