



Photos by Serena Vasudeva/Chronicle

"Neither rain nor hail" may be the unofficial postman's creed, but the condition of the roads in the Lake Park neighborhood have stopped U.S. Postal Service and Fed-Ex deliveries to the residents' doors. Instead, mail is dropped off at a hub residents installed themselves at the front of the neighborhood.

Large rocks, deep gorges, dirt patches commonplace on Lake Park streets

By Serena Vasudeva | Staff writer
svasudeva@crossville-chronicle.com

For years, a community in Crossville has dealt with roads in poor condition.

The Lake Park neighborhood in southwestern Cumberland County is located off Newton Road and includes Owenby Drive, Morgan Circle, Linda Street, Sharon Circle, Walker Drive, Tresa Street and Diane Circle.

All of the roads are owned and maintained by the Lake Park Property Owners Association.

Debbie Hilton owns a home on Tresa Street, located toward the middle of the neighborhood. The roads near her home include large rocks, dirt patches, massive puddles and deep gorges.

"Not too many people live out here because, I believe, of the roads," Hilton said.

The roads are prone to flooding



when it rains, which can cause Hilton to miss church. She has even missed a few days of work due to flooding and muddy conditions.

The roads are so deteriorated that the United States Postal Service and FedEx no longer deliver to the homes inside Lake Park.

"A recent review and audit of your road conditions by our district safety specialist found them to be unsafe and in need of immediate re-

Denny Singleton, who works for a company hired by a resident to fix the roads, said exposed bedrock on this Lake Park road will cause gravel to roll off. He suggested fixing the road by building it up with dirt, which will help gravel stay in place.

pair," a June 2022 letter from USPS Postmaster Randall Bryant reads.

Residents of Lake Park had to install mailboxes at the front of the neighborhood to receive their mail. Anna Jackson, who owns property in the neighborhood, said that equipment had to be rented to properly install the mailboxes.

LAKE PARK

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One of Jackson's tenants, Jessica Kittrell, wrote a letter in which she said, "Not only is Lake Park becoming a community which cannot be served by the postal service due to the conditions of the roads, it is becoming a run down community which is not being served by the leaders of the board."

"I'm hoping that these roads can be fixed properly so mail can get back in here," Hilton said.

Around 90 people own property in Lake Park, including Anthony Johnson. He has lived in Lake Park since 1999 and said that the roads are the worst they've ever been.

"They're barely roads at this point," Johnson said. "I'm ashamed to tell people I live in Lake Park because it's just gone downhill."

Over the last 26 years, Johnson has fixed every road in the neighborhood using thousands of dollars in gravel and sand. At first, he used a truck and trailer. Now that his health has declined, he carries 5-pound buckets of rocks when he is able to.

Out of all the roads, Johnson said that Morgan Circle is in the worst condition.

"Morgan Circle ain't seen no rock in years other than what I've put on it," he said.

He added that Sharon Circle is so narrow that cars cannot pass each other.

"I've been stuck more times than I can count," Johnson said.

Johnson no longer pays his POA dues, citing the thousands of dollars he's sunk into the roads. Lake Park dues vary, with a \$50 base charge, plus \$5 per lot and \$10 per dwelling. The total ranges from \$65 to \$95 per year.

Jackson has also maintained the roads at her own expense. She provided invoices from 2022 which

show that she spent \$310 on gravel for Morgan Circle. She also paid \$7,650 to MCK to have Morgan Circle and Linda Street graded and covered in gravel. When roads are graded, a large machine is used to even the road and smooth pot holes. Workers also trimmed tree limbs near the roadway. The *Chronicle* attempted to find a business license for MCK but could not find one registered with the city or the county.

Around August of 2022, the Lake Park board of directors started logging empty lots in the neighborhood to raise funds for the roads. According to published member meeting minutes from Oct. 1, 2022, the logging proceeds were going to be used to grade the gravel on Owenby Drive, Sharon Circle, Walker Drive and Diane Circle. It was also supposed to be used to install culverts and ditches.

According to the board's documents, \$103,526 was made from logging and \$84,096 was spent on the roads. Lake Park POA Secretary Jerri Lynn Toms said that the money only fixed Owenby Drive and Diane Circle, which she said accounted for a third of the roads in the neighborhood. Since then, the board has not fixed the roads except for the occasional pot hole or culvert.

"If we can't afford to put gravel down, we certainly cannot afford the roads to get scraped and graded and even asphalted. We were quoted a million dollars per mile of roadway," Toms said. "The roads are 50 years old and they've only been maintained twice, so you do the math."

She said the logging was met with pushback by several residents who did not want it to take place.

"We had to wait until the last of the original owners passed away because they had a very steadfast 'there



Photo submitted by Anna Jackson

Contractors hired by Jackson bring a load of gravel into Lake Park.



Serena Vasudeva/Chronicle

An uneven road in Lake Park with large stones and bare dirt.

will be no logging' rule and they stuck to it for 40 years," Toms said.

Hilton said that Lake Park contractors have laid stone on Tresa Street, but they stopped just short of her driveway. She ended up investing her own money into gravel and a culvert to prevent flooding.

"My husband and I put in more than \$750 worth of stone down from our driveway up. Lake Park didn't do it, I did. Did I ask for a reimbursement for them? No, because I knew I wouldn't get it," Hilton said.

Residents say the better roads, such as Owenby Drive and Tresa Street, have been damaged by speeding.

Hilton said she noticed an increase in speeding vehicles after she fixed her road. She installed a speed bump, which also helps keep

water from flowing into her driveway.

"We have quads in here that when they gun it, it rips the roads up," Hilton said.

"Speed bumps have been installed, some at the owner's expense, on several roads due to their premature degradation," the Lake Park POA Spring 2025 newsletter read.

Also in 2022, a dam over Twin Lake located in the back of the neighborhood was closed. According to meeting minutes from Oct. 1, 2022, the Twin Lake Dam road was considered "too cost-prohibitive to repair." The dam is still closed today.

Several residents ended up suing Lake Park in 2022 over road conditions and to secure the ability to vote in the POA. The lawsuit is still underway.

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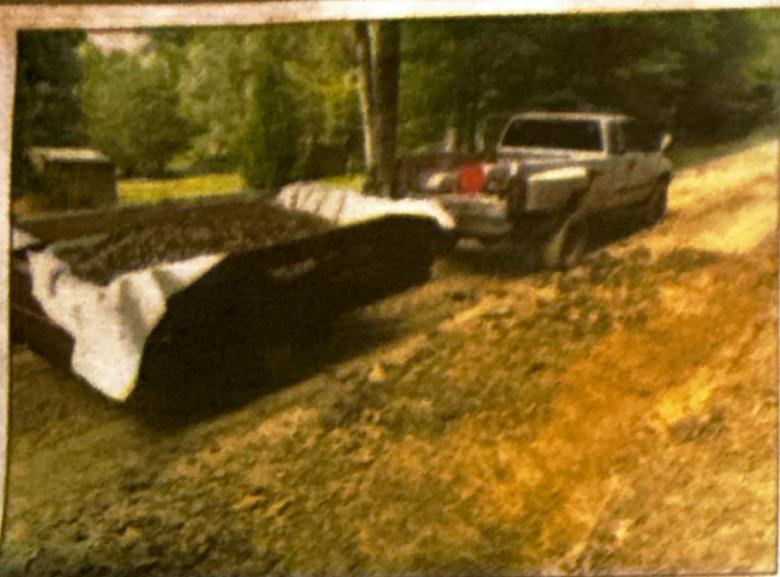


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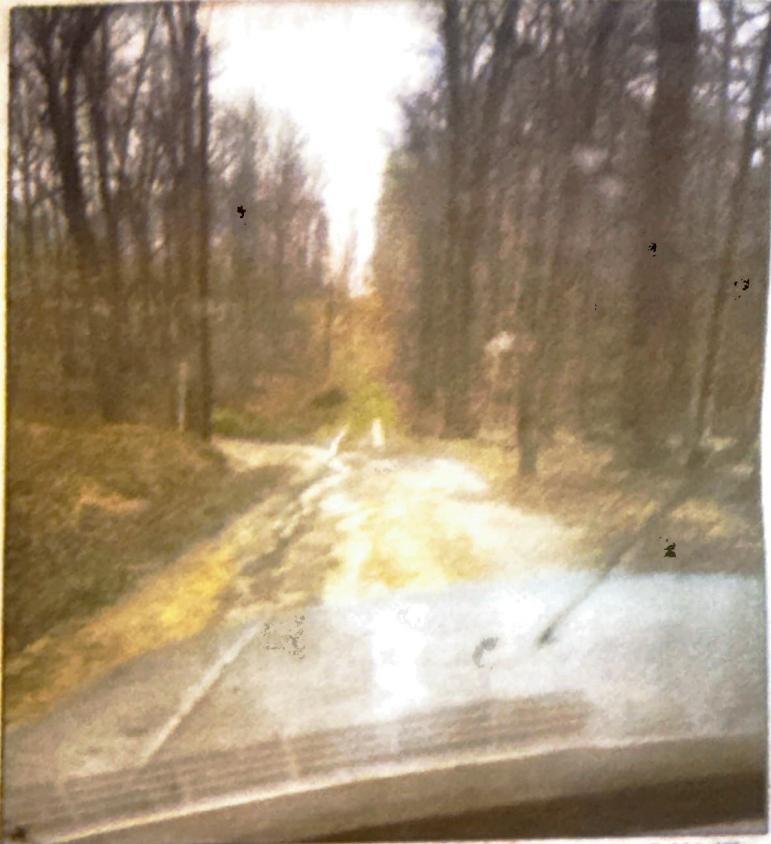


Photo submitted by Debbie Hilton

Water runs down Morgan Circle. Singleton said that adding a ditch and culvert would prevent water from pooling and eroding the road.



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Denny Singleton worked for Daggett Trucking, a company Jackson hired to fix the roads previously. Now, Singleton hauls gravel across Bledsoe, Van Buren, White and Sequatchie counties, where he says "go-in-and-get-it-done" work is a common sight.

The *Chronicle* provided photos of current road conditions for Singleton to analyze.

"That looks like it needs a lot of TLC," he said. "It ain't been maintained; I can see that."

He said the roads have gullies in them, which are formed when water flows over a road and washes it away. Gullies are prevented by adding ditches to the side of a road and crowning it, or making the center taller than the sides. Culverts can also help direct water away from the roads, though in some rocky areas they cannot be placed.

"If you don't put culverts in and you've got too much water running down the ditch, it'll make a gully. You don't maintain the road, it'll make a river," Singleton said.

Singleton said this Lake Park road needs to be crowned and that ditches need to be dug on the sides of the road. "Doesn't look like it's been graded in quite a while," Singleton said.

He said that the roads in Lake Park need to be graded.

"I know a load of gravel you're looking at \$500 to \$700 a load and, you know, you might get 600 feet out of it. And that's just one lane," Singleton said.

Singleton said getting a county to take a road on can be a challenge. The roads in Lake Park are not on the county's road list.

"The county won't take nothing like that over. I don't know how Cumberland is, but like Bledsoe, you have to have so many inches of gravel and so many culverts and ditches in," Singleton said.

"The county does not want to take on these roads. They don't want to be responsible for them," POA Secretary Toms said.

Without the required maintenance, Singleton said that the road will become impassable.

"Driving through the gullies, it's gonna wear on your shocks. If you hit one too hard, it could bust a wheel. Your car could bottom out, especially cars since they sit so close to the ground," Singleton said.

In 2024, the Lake Park POA sold 57 empty lots to Alpha Management Partners LLC. Toms said Alpha Management will develop housing on the lots, which will be resold.

According to a May 21 board of directors update, a contract with Alpha Management "encompasses a five-year plan which includes not only passable roads throughout but off-grid homesteading."

Serena Vasudeva/Chronicle

Toms said that the center of the neighborhood has many small lots that are "not buildable" and are only suitable for campers.

"So what we decided to do was offer off-grid buildings, so we wouldn't have to worry about putting in all of these utilities and so on," Toms said.

Once those lots sell, Toms said they would use the money to fix Diane and Walker, which are main roads. Then, equipment can come into the neighborhood and more homes can be built.

"In the long run, Alpha Management will be responsible for the roads, but not until they've actually come in here and started to build," Toms said.

She said it could take five years for all of the roads to be fixed.

Rance Cagle, a Knoxville real estate agent and the owner of Alpha Management Partners, did not confirm what his plans were for the neighborhood or if he would be building homes.

"That's my prerogative of what I'm gonna do with my land that I've purchased," Cagle said. "I don't know anything about the road conditions. That's not my department ... I know there are a couple roads out there that are a little rough."

Cagle has several lots in Lake Park listed on various real estate sites for sale off of Diane Circle, Tresa Street, Morgan Circle and Sharon Circle.

The *Chronicle* attempted to reach Lake Park POA President Robyn Riel but received no response.