

THE STEWARD

WEST GEORGIA

Useful things. Local people. Honest business.

INSIDE County affairs · Local people · Almanac · Good farther afield · Trading Post

FAMILY & NEARBY PLACES

Your next family outing may start at the library

A park pass. A borrowed pair of binoculars. An afternoon with room to enjoy it.



A northern cardinal at a feeder. Begin by noticing the birds around you.

Before buying another thing for a day outdoors, ask what your library can lend you. Georgia's public-library program includes a ParkPass for parking and a separate Historic Site Family Pass for two general admissions. Special events, tours, and program fees are not included in that admission pass.

There is also a Discovery Backpack with binoculars and nature guides. Ask your branch about availability before planning around one; borrowing limits apply. West Georgia Regional Library System lists the local pass choices and checkout conditions.

[Georgia library passes & Discovery Backpacks](#)
[West Georgia passes, availability & limits](#)

Program facts checked September 8. Planning suggestions are from The Steward. Confirm current availability with your library.

FROM AROUND HERE

The useful things neighbors know

A repaired tool. An old photograph with a place and a date. A garden lesson that saved a wasted season. The small things are part of this place's story.

This edition's question: What local information takes you too long to find?

Send your town, question, or idea to moss.sonsproperty@gmail.com. We check facts and ask permission before publishing contributions.

AROUND HERE

A few dates for the calendar

Mon, Sept. 14 · 2-3 p.m.

It's Cornhole Day!

An indoor miniature cornhole activity for families.

Buchanan-Haralson Public Library
145 Van Wert Street, Buchanan

Fee and registration details are not stated; ask the library.

[Check the organizer's listing](#)

Mon, Sept. 21 · 2-3 p.m.

Celebrate Mo Willems

A library program celebrating the author's characters and stories.

Buchanan-Haralson Public Library
145 Van Wert Street, Buchanan

Ask about ages, registration, and access before going.

[Check the organizer's listing](#)

Times are local. WGRLS listings checked September 8. Confirm changes with the library: 770-646-3369.

BEFORE YOU GO

[Weather & alerts](#)
[River planning & conditions](#)

Check the update time. This printed edition is not a live weather or river report.

ADVERTISING SPACE AVAILABLE

A local business. A place in the paper.

We can help write and arrange your ad. See the advertising desk on page 4.



Read online.
Post an item.
Send a local notice.

AT THE COUNTY DESK

Ambulance service, a tower request, and school taxes

These were listed for votes on the September 1 county commission agenda. The agenda establishes what was scheduled; the final decisions have not been verified for this edition.

Ambulance service

An Ambucare contract was on the agenda. The accompanying packet includes an emergency medical services agreement. A useful follow-up is what coverage and contract terms the board ultimately approved.

Rockmart and Coppermine roads

A request sought conditional use of agricultural land for a telecommunications tower. Nearby residents can read the location and proposal in the county packet, then ask for the recorded decision and any conditions.

School tax levy

A Haralson County Board of Education tax-levy resolution was listed for a vote. We have not verified the adopted rate or its effect on a household bill, so this edition reports neither a tax increase nor a decrease.

[September 1 agenda](#)

[County meeting papers and later minutes](#)

Document-based reporting, not an account of attendance. Outcome verification is still needed. County office: 770-646-2002.

COMING UP

Tues, Sept. 15 • 6 p.m.

County commission work session

155 Van Wert Street, Buchanan. The county lists this meeting; check the agenda and any schedule changes before attending. Ask the county about access needs or speaking procedures.

[Check current details](#)

Sat, Sept. 19 • Advertised start: 9 a.m.

Fried Pie Festival

Downtown Buchanan, near the historic courthouse. The organizer advertises September 19. Confirm this year's hours, admission and parking before going; the map on the historical society's page is labeled 2025.

[Check current details](#)

[Organizer's announcement](#)

Mon, Oct. 5 • Registration deadline

Check your voter registration

Georgia's calendar lists October 5 as the registration deadline for the November 3 general election. Advance voting begins October 13. Confirm your registration and local voting information through the official voter page.

[Check current details](#)

[Official election calendar](#)

Sources: county calendar, festival organizer, and Georgia Secretary of State. Checked Sept. 8; times are local.

THE STEWARD ALMANAC

A little preparation for the season ahead

GARDEN

Make room for a modest fall crop

UGA's nearby Paulding County guidance suggests planning around sunlight and access, clearing finished summer plants, and testing soil when needed. Cabbage and broccoli may be started as transplants; greens and radishes are among seed options. Ask Haralson Extension what fits your site and timing.

[Read the practical guidance](#)

Garden guidance: UGA Extension, August 2023, reviewed September 8, 2026. The property walk and field-note activity are The Steward's practical suggestions; they are not forecasts.

HOME & LAND

Walk the water's path

On a dry day, look from the ground for blocked drainage openings, displaced gravel, and places where water has left a mark. Note what you see before buying materials. Leave steep banks, flowing water, and heavy covers alone; use the existing guide to decide what needs help.

[Read the practical guidance](#)

BRING THE CHILDREN INTO IT

Keep one page of field notes

Choose a familiar bench, yard, or short path. Have a child record the date, a bird, a leaf, or one change since the last visit. Sketching counts. Use a notebook you already own and leave wildlife undisturbed.

[Read the practical guidance](#)

PEOPLE WORTH KNOWING

Meshea Ingram's work to stand beside families

Love Can Build a Briggs connects water-safety education with care for parents living with loss.

Meshea Ingram's published account begins with her son Briggs, who died at two years old following a drowning accident in 2022. She describes Christian faith as central to the work she began in his memory: Love Can Build a Briggs.

The foundation describes two connected purposes: helping families prepare around water and supporting people after the loss of a child. Its website offers swim-scholarship applications and describes educational outreach, remembrance activities, and support for grieving families.

The Greater Haralson Chamber lists Love Can Build a Briggs as its 2026 Unsung Heroes Non-Profit of the Year. That recognition brings a local family's work to the attention of neighbors who may need help, or may have something useful to offer.

[Meshea's published account](#)
[Foundation programs and scholarship application](#)
[Chamber's 2026 award list](#)
[CDC: swimming lessons and supervision](#)

Prepared from the founder's published account, foundation information, the Chamber's award list, and CDC guidance; no interview conducted. This is editorial coverage, not an advertisement or an independent evaluation of a swim program.

For parents interested in a scholarship, begin with the foundation's application and ask about eligibility, current availability, instructors, and costs. A lesson is one part of preparation. CDC advises that children still need close, continuous supervision around water even after swimming lessons.

There is room to notice this work without asking a grieving family to turn its loss into an uplifting ending. Read Meshea's own account if you would like to understand more. The practical invitation is to learn what help exists and ask what is actually needed.

ACROSS AMERICA

A small shorebird has a record year

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reported 99 nesting pairs of Great Lakes piping plovers in 2026, up from 88 in 2025. A total of 184 chicks reached flight, including 24 raised through the captive-rearing program.

The agency credits work by partners and volunteers on nesting protection, habitat, and public education. The population remains endangered. This is progress worth noticing, with more recovery work ahead.

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service · Sept. 3, 2026](#)
A Great Lakes recovery story, not a report of birds counted in Haralson County.

IN THE WIDER WORLD

Years of patient work, fewer people suffering

In January, the Atlanta-based Carter Center reported a provisional worldwide total of 10 human Guinea worm cases for 2025. The campaign began in 1986, when annual human cases were estimated at 3.5 million.

National health programs, field workers, community volunteers, and international partners have sustained the effort. Animal infections and continued transmission remain challenges; the disease has not been eradicated. These are 2025 figures reported in 2026, not a count of this year's cases.

[Carter Center · Jan. 30, 2026 report](#)
[How the international partnership works](#)

A progress report worth revisiting; not breaking news or personal medical advice.

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WORK

Good that keeps going

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Galatians 6:10 · KJV

Paul's appeal comes amid instructions about restoring gently, carrying burdens, and persevering in doing good. In the same chapter, he points his boasting to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our standing before GOD rests in Christ; useful work is a response to grace.

Our application this week is simple: learn the facts before repeating a claim, take one burden off a neighbor, and do the useful thing you can finish. A quiet act of care may never become a headline. It still matters.

[Read Galatians 6 in context](#)

BEFORE YOU BUY

Before another bag of fertilizer, test the soil

A struggling lawn or garden is a question to investigate. A soil test can help identify nutrient needs and guide lime and fertilizer choices; it does not diagnose every plant problem.

Start with one clearly identified area and tell Extension what you want to grow. Ask for sampling directions before collecting. Keep areas with different uses or conditions separate, and use clean tools and containers.

Haralson County UGA Extension handles questions about soil and water testing at 770-646-2026. Ask about the current fee, drop-off procedure, and turnaround. You probably do not need a new gadget to collect the sample.

[Haralson County UGA Extension UGA soil-sampling guidance](#)

UGA guidance; local contact checked September 8.

HOME & LAND

Measure the gate before ordering the load

The price of the material is only part of a delivery. Before ordering gravel, firewood, or a bulky used item, agree on how it will reach the place where you need it.

Measure the narrowest entrance. Note tight turns, overhead obstacles, slopes, and the unloading spot. Send the supplier clear pictures, then ask what vehicle will come and what access it requires. Your measurements help start that conversation; they do not certify access.

If lifting or walking is difficult, say where you need the load left and ask whether placement or stacking is included. Paying for useful handling can make sense. Buying more than you can store or manage does not.

[Free delivery-access planner](#)

Practical planning guidance from Moss & Sons; the delivering operator must confirm access.

FAMILY OUTDOORS

Leave room to turn around

For a first family ride, plan a short outing with an easy way back. Agree on the turnaround point before you leave and let the least comfortable rider help set the pace.

The free family ride planner helps you outline distance, time, and a return point. Read the route preview together. It cannot certify a road as safe, predict quiet traffic, or inspect today's surface.

Before going, use the riding guide to check helmets, bike fit, passenger arrangements, and the rules for your chosen place. A short ride everyone wants to repeat is a worthwhile day.

[Plan a short family ride](#)

[West Georgia family riding guide](#)

Planning suggestions. Check current route conditions and land-manager rules.

BUY · SELL · FIND · PUT IT BACK TO WORK

THE TRADING POST

For sale · Wanted · Free · Sale or trade

POST AN ITEM FOR REVIEW

Give the item, condition, known faults, and what is included.

State the actual price or write Free. For a wanted item, give a budget.

Include your town and pickup or delivery arrangements. Keep your home address out of the public description.

We follow up for photos and agree on the public contact details before publication.

[mossandsonsga.com/trading-post](#)

The board is accepting submissions. No third-party listings are published in this pilot. The Moss & Sons offers are house advertisements.

To close, renew, or report a listing: call Daniel with the title or confirmation number. The pilot is updated manually.

MOSS & SONS · HOUSE ADVERTISEMENT

FIREWOOD

Delivered. Stacked. Where you need it.



Cord or fractional cord. Availability, access, quantity, and delivery price confirmed before ordering.

770-714-9968

MOSS & SONS · HOUSE ADVERTISEMENT

YOU PICK THE BIKE. WE DO THE ASSEMBLY.

Bicycles, e-bikes, and trikes. Model review, assembly, and arranged pickup or local delivery.

[mossandsonsga.com/bike-assembly](#)

Arrange service before shipping.

WORK & COMMUNITY NOTICES

Need a hand? Have work to offer?

Send the town, work, hours, pay or terms, and a way to respond. Local events and yard-sale dates are welcome for review.

THE LOCAL ADVERTISING DESK

Let neighbors know what you do

Classified · Business box · Section sponsor

Send your offer and contact details. We prepare a proof; you approve wording, price, placement, and run dates. Advertising is labeled and does not buy a recommendation.

Pilot prices are quoted individually. No payment with an inquiry. No guaranteed readership or results. Print and email runs must be confirmed before being sold.

ON THE BACK PORCH

A little word work

Change one letter at a time, keeping the letters in place. Make a real word at every step.

WOOD > ____ > ____ > SOLD

One answer: WOOD > GOOD > GOLD > SOLD.

How to maintain a woodland trail and organize a small hunting-club workday

Learn the manageable parts. Bring in help for the bigger pieces.

What this lesson covers

This lesson covers a short, established private walking trail on firm, gentle ground and ordinary camp cleanup. It does not cover new road construction, powered clearing, hazardous trees, stand work, stream crossings, or shooting-lane design. A maintained footpath is not automatically a vehicle route.

Before starting: know when to stop

- Confirm the landowner's permission, lease limits, route, and work date. Coordinate with every hunting party; do not combine the work area with active hunting.
- Stop for hanging limbs, leaning trees, tensioned branches, unknown wire, unstable ground, deep water, nests or aggressive insects, or a route you cannot see clearly.
- Keep children, pets, and other workers outside tool and machine work zones. If powered work is needed, arrange it separately with qualified operators.

Tools and supplies

- Owner-approved route sketch, phone or notebook, and photographs
- Gloves, eye protection, sturdy footwear, drinking water, and first-aid supplies
- Hand pruners or loppers sized to the small growth and used as their maker directs
- Litter grabber, rubbish bags, and a light cart if the route suits it

Effort and spending

Begin with a 30-60 minute planning walk and a short trial section. A modest cleanup may fit a few hours with two capable adults, but dense growth, carrying distance, heat, and individual ability can change that substantially. Plan breaks and an early stopping time; acreage alone does not predict effort.

Use sound tools already owned or borrowed. Before buying anything, agree who brings bags and water, where rubbish will go, and whether the club will pay disposal or hauling costs. There is no reason to rent a machine for the planning walk.

Do some yourself, hire the rest

Keep: The route sketch, club coordination, hand-tool upkeep within your ability, litter collection, photographs, and routine checks.

Hire: Selected machine-accessible brush work, camp gravel, material handling, hauling, or assessed access repairs. Hazardous trees and elevated stands need their own qualified providers.

Handoff: Send the address, route length, access photos, authorized contact, and the exact part you want priced. Moss & Sons work is subject to a written scope and no Saturday scheduling.

Seven practical steps

1. Choose one route and one result. Draw the gate, camp, route endpoints, and areas that stay untouched. Decide whether success means carrying a bag to camp or walking to a field; do not widen the route for an unplanned truck. Confirm where people can park without blocking an exit.
2. Walk together before distributing tools. From accessible ground, note obstacles and photograph concerns. Leave uncertain areas alone. Agree a meeting point, how to call for help, the property address, and the finish time. One club contact keeps the approved list and authorizes changes.
3. Assign small, separate tasks. Pair people for route checks, ordinary litter collection, light vegetation trimming, and camp tidying. Offer non-lifting tasks such as photographs, records, and supplies. Avoid putting workers close enough to reach one another with tools; no one should work in a machine's path.
4. Remove ordinary litter before trimming. Use a grabber for visible everyday rubbish. Do not reach blindly into growth or bags, handle sharps, open drums, disturb unknown chemicals, or pull embedded wire. Isolate those locations for appropriate help. Keep rubbish separate from clean plant material.
5. Trim only small approved growth from secure footing. Use hand pruners or loppers only within their rated capacity, at a comfortable reachable height, with hands clear of the cutting area. Do not climb, cut overhead limbs, or tackle bent or loaded stems. Preserve established trees and useful cover; leave roots and the trail's soil profile undisturbed.
6. Place debris and check the route again. Move only manageable loose material to the agreed location, keeping it away from walking surfaces, drains, fences, and water. Walk the route without tools to spot sharp cut ends, litter, and obstacles. Do not improvise a new ditch or bridge to solve a wet section.
7. Close the workday with a short record. Count people and tools back in, arrange the agreed rubbish removal, photograph the same viewpoints, and list unresolved areas. Tell members exactly which route was maintained and which areas remain closed or uncertain.

Common mistakes

Expanding a light cleanup into tree cutting or machine work without a new plan / Leaving sharp ends, rubbish bags, or brush piles in the route / Calling a trail safe for vehicles or an elevated stand merely because the vegetation is shorter

Finish and aftercare

A good finish is the agreed walking route maintained, ordinary rubbish removed, tools accounted for, and unresolved hazards clearly recorded-not every acre cleared.

Check the route from safe ground before planned use and after storms once conditions settle. Schedule a light revisit when regrowth starts to obstruct the agreed route. Record recurrent wet areas for a separate drainage review.

[Full lesson, related tools and annotated sources](#)

Sources and further guidance

[National Park Service: Leave No Trace principles](#)

[Georgia DNR: hunting resources](#)

[Georgia EPD: erosion and sedimentation](#)

How to plan and prepare a small winter food plot

Learn the manageable parts. Bring in help for the bigger pieces.

What this lesson covers

Start with an existing suitable opening, not clearing woodland for a new plot. This is a DIY workflow for a small cool-season food plot: site review, sampling, materials, agreed ground preparation, and follow-up. Winter describes the intended forage season; it is not a universal instruction to sow during winter. Seed choice, sowing dates, rates, and depth need a site-specific plan.

Before starting: know when to stop

- Confirm ownership or lease permission, sensitive areas, and utility locations before sampling or disturbing soil. Resolve private-line and septic uncertainty separately.
- Do not fill wet ground, remove a buffer, redirect water, burn vegetation, or begin pesticide treatment from this lesson.
- If the plot requires tree removal, major tillage, steep-ground work, or equipment you cannot operate competently, separate that work from the DIY portion.

Tools and supplies

- Tape measure, plot sketch, notebook, and sample labels
- Clean sampling tool, clean plastic bucket, and county-approved sample bags
- Gloves, suitable footwear, drinking water, and a hand rake for small suitable areas
- Only after the plan is settled: specified seed and soil amendments, a suitable spreader, and any agreed planting equipment

Effort and spending

Set aside an initial visit for measuring and sampling, then separate later visits for preparation and planting. Allow lead time for the laboratory and recommended soil amendments. A small plot may be manageable by hand; the amount of vegetation and soil work, not just its area, determines whether that is realistic.

Price testing first. Then list seed, any recommended amendments, delivery, tool access, and follow-up. Do not buy a large seed mix or a load of lime before the soil and planting choices are known. One well-maintained small plot is a reasonable first trial.

Do some yourself, hire the rest

Keep: Measuring, coordinating the club, sampling when suitable, buying approved materials, small hand-work tasks, and monitoring.

Hire: Suitable plot-ground preparation, approved brush work, access improvements, material delivery, or hauling. Agree explicitly who supplies seed and who does the planting.

Handoff: Send the plot sketch, soil report, planting card, photos, access details, and the specific groundwork needed. A preparation quote must not be mistaken for a guarantee of forage or wildlife outcomes.

Seven practical steps

1. Define the opening and its conditions. Sketch the existing boundary, access, shade, wet areas, and vegetation. Measure simple sections separately and total their area. Square feet divided by 43,560 gives acres: a 60-by-80-foot rectangle is 4,800 square feet, about 0.11 acre. A sketch or phone map does not establish a property boundary.
2. Arrange a representative soil sample. Ask the county Extension office for current instructions and identify the intended wildlife crop. UGA's linked guide calls for 8-10 subsamples per distinct zone at a 6-inch depth for wildlife plots. Use clean tools and a clean plastic bucket; do not mix unlike soils or wet and dry zones into one misleading sample. Follow the guide for air drying, labeling, and submission. Sampling is ground disturbance, so resolve locating first.
3. Write a planting card before ordering. With local Extension or qualified habitat advice, write down the crop or mix, plot area, planting window, soil recommendations, seed rate, sowing method, depth, and follow-up. Ask how the mix's seeds should be handled if their planting needs differ. Keep the source and date with the card.
4. Convert the plan into quantities. For a recommendation expressed per acre, multiply that rate by measured acres. For a rate per 1,000 square feet, multiply it by square feet divided by 1,000. Keep seed and each soil amendment on separate lines with units. Have the adviser or supplier check the list; adding extra product is not a substitute for the prescribed amount.
5. Prepare only the agreed surface. Remove visible ordinary debris and address vegetation using the approved plan. On a small accessible area, hand raking may be part of the work; it is not a substitute for an unsuitable site's required preparation. If tillage or other powered work is specified, use competent help and the equipment manual. Leave the surrounding cover and drainage intact.
6. Plant to the card and product directions. Wait for the advised timing and ground conditions. Calibrate the spreader by its instructions, measure the planned quantity, and use the specified passes, seed placement, and finishing method. Stop when the prepared surface or weather does not match the plan. Do not automatically rake every seed deeply into the soil or improvise a herbicide mixture.
7. Record the work and inspect establishment. Keep dates, product labels, quantities, weather notes, and photographs from a fixed point. Check emergence and erosion at the intervals agreed with your adviser. If a patch fails, describe the conditions before buying more seed. Do not keep driving across the plot to inspect it.

Common mistakes

Treating winter food plots as a single crop with one statewide planting date / Sampling only the easiest corner or mixing unlike areas / Applying guessed lime, fertilizer, seed rates, or one burial depth to a mixed seed bag / Assuming a planted food plot is the same as feed distribution or hunting permission

Finish and aftercare

Keep the measured plot map, soil report, planting card, receipts, and a named person responsible for follow-up. Completion means the agreed work is recorded; it does not mean germination or deer use is guaranteed. Use the crop-specific plan for inspection, weed management, and future testing. Ask Georgia DNR about habitat support if the club needs a broader wildlife plan. This lesson does not advise bait placement, harvest strategy, or predict hunting results.

[Full lesson, related tools and annotated sources](#)

Sources and further guidance

- [UGA Extension: soil sampling for lawns, gardens, and wildlife food plots \(PDF\)](#)
- [Haralson County UGA Extension](#)
- [Georgia DNR: Deer Management Assistance Program](#)
- [Georgia 811: the before-you-dig process](#)
- [Georgia 811: private utilities](#)

How to set up a simple family campsite on your own land

Learn the manageable parts. Bring in help for the bigger pieces.

What this lesson covers

This is a low-disturbance family tent-site lesson using an existing suitable opening. It does not authorize overnight use, commercial guests, RV occupancy, utilities, structures, land clearing, or work near water. Permission and local requirements come first, even on land you own.

Before starting: know when to stop

- Reject locations beneath suspect limbs or trees, in flood-prone ground or drainage paths, beside unstable banks, or where there is no dependable exit.
- Check actual water buffers, setbacks, fire restrictions, and overnight-use requirements. Recreation guidance does not replace parcel-specific rules.
- Do not dig tent-drainage trenches, build a platform, add hookups, or light a fire under this setup lesson. Locate before any stakes or other ground penetration.

Tools and supplies

- Tent dimensions, route sketch, tape measure, phone, and notebook
- Suitable tent and maker-approved groundsheet, using equipment you already own where possible
- Gloves, litter grabber, bags, and a light rake only where appropriate
- Drinking water, agreed toilet arrangements, secure food storage, lighting, and first-aid supplies

Effort and spending

Use one daylight visit to choose and measure the location and another short visit for setup and cleanup. A ready-made opening may need little labor. Ground reshaping, drainage, material delivery, or clearing changes the project and should not be squeezed into an afternoon's tent setup.

Try the layout before buying gravel, timber, furniture, or a bigger tent. Budget essentials such as drinking water, toilet arrangements, waste handling, and suitable shelter first. An existing durable space and borrowed camping kit may meet the family's need.

Do some yourself, hire the rest

Keep: Layout, family planning, ordinary cleanup, tent setup within your abilities, packing, and routine checks.

Hire: Separately assessed gravel access, parking, material handling, selected brush work, or suitable ground preparation. Trees, utilities, structures, and commercial-use approval need their own scope.

Handoff: Send the intended number of people, tent or vehicle dimensions, arrival route, photographs, and what part of preparation you want help with.

Seven practical steps

1. Walk the arrival and exit route. Plan where the car stays, how people carry supplies, and how everyone leaves if weather changes. Confirm the gate can be opened from inside and the exit stays unobstructed. A small walking distance may matter more to your family than a remote view.
2. Choose an existing durable opening. Look in daylight and from accessible ground. Prefer a place needing little alteration and assess it again after ordinary rain, without entering floodwater. Keep the footprint small and protect vegetation and water. Leave questionable tree or ground conditions for qualified assessment.
3. Lay out the full tent footprint. Use a tape and the manufacturer's dimensions to allow for the tent, guy lines, access, and a clear walking route. Check fit without driving stakes first. Separate the sleeping area from vehicle movement and cooking; use the equipment's required clearances.
4. Tidy lightly, without remaking the land. Collect visible ordinary litter and remove only loose objects that prevent the approved setup. Do not strip the site to bare soil, cut roots, excavate rocks, or move historic objects. If a satisfactory tent position requires substantial grading, reconsider the location or obtain a separate plan.
5. Settle water, toilets, cooking, and rubbish. Bring drinking water rather than treating the creek as a tap. Choose a lawful toilet and waste-disposal arrangement before anyone stays. Use secure food and rubbish containers. Keep fuel-burning stoves and generators outside and away from tents and openings according to their instructions; never use them inside a tent. A fire-free visit is a complete camping plan.
6. Set up and test the route in daylight. Erect the tent exactly as its maker directs after locating and other checks are complete. Try the family arrival, unloading, and toilet route. Look for guy-line trip points and places a less-mobile person needs help. Share the location and a check-in plan with someone off site.
7. Leave a repeatable close-down routine. Count stakes and equipment, remove food and rubbish, inspect for damage, and leave the small footprint tidy. Note what the family actually used before adding permanent improvements. If offering paid stays later, obtain a separate review before advertising them.

Common mistakes

Clearing or buying materials before trying the tent layout / Choosing a low, scenic spot without checking flood and tree hazards / Treating a tent site as permission for RV hookups or paid accommodation / Leaving sanitation and rubbish until guests arrive

Finish and aftercare

The tent fits, the exit is clear, everyone knows the water and toilet plan, and the area can be tidied back to its agreed condition. This is not a campsite safety certification.

Inspect before each stay and after significant weather. Pause use when tree, bank, water, or access conditions change. Keep a brief record of litter, wear, wet spots, and repairs; do not continually enlarge the footprint to avoid maintenance.

[Full lesson, related tools and annotated sources](#)

Sources and further guidance

[National Park Service: Leave No Trace principles](#)

[CPSC: carbon monoxide safety](#)

[Georgia 811: the before-you-dig process](#)

[Georgia EPD: erosion and sedimentation](#)

How to begin cleaning up overgrown property yourself

Learn the manageable parts. Bring in help for the bigger pieces.

What this lesson covers

Begin with visible, accessible ground and ordinary hand cleanup. This is not a rotary-cutter operating course or an instruction to walk blindly into tall growth. Buying, inheriting, or preparing to sell land does not tell you what is hidden beneath it.

Before starting: know when to stop

- Do not enter concealed wells, unstable structures, dense unseen ground, suspect trees, wet depressions, or unknown piles. Record them from a safe position.
- Stop for dumped chemicals, sharps, suspected asbestos, embedded wire, utility signs, or material you cannot identify. Do not burn mixed debris.
- No rotary mowing without a competent operator, the exact tractor and cutter manuals, intact guards, a suitable inspected site, and controlled bystander separation.

Tools and supplies

- Property records, a simple sketch, phone camera, and notebook
- Gloves, eye protection, suitable boots and clothing, water, and first-aid supplies
- Litter grabber, bags, and separate containers for ordinary known waste
- Hand pruners or loppers for reachable light growth within their rated capacity; a suitable cart for light loads

Effort and spending

Start with a 30-60 minute survey from known accessible areas, then time one small hand-cleanup section. Use that result to plan later sections with rest and disposal time. Do not convert it into an assumed acres-per-hour mowing rate: vegetation, obstacles, access, and equipment change the work.

Spend first on identifying the work and arranging accepted disposal. Check what can be handled with existing tools. A mower rental, brush-clearing attachment, disposal charge, and tree contractor are separate costs, not one generic cleanup price.

Do some yourself, hire the rest

Keep: Goal setting, records, accessible hand cleanup, property photographs, and a maintenance checklist.

Hire: Suitable bush hogging, selected brush reduction, hauling, access opening, or later grading. Hazardous trees, contaminated waste, structures, and unclear boundaries require separate qualified help.

Handoff: Send the map, photographs, known hazards, access, and desired finish. Tell Daniel which hand-work sections you will keep and which equipment-supported sections you want quoted.

Seven practical steps

1. Define the intended finish. Write down whether you want listing-photo access, a maintained field, a visible fence line, or a small usable area near the house. Mark what stays: trees, screening, wildlife cover, structures, and known sensitive ground. Confirm ownership and uncertain boundaries before touching them.
2. Make a three-part map. Label areas you can inspect, areas that need qualified review, and areas to leave untouched. Photograph unknown conditions without entering them. Find existing records for septic, wells, utilities, old buildings, and access. Arrange locating before any digging or ground disturbance.
3. Arrange disposal before collecting piles. Ask the receiving facility what it accepts and what must be separated. Plan ordinary rubbish, clean vegetation, and any approved bulky items separately. Do not schedule a borrowed trailer unless payload, securement, loading, and lawful transport are resolved.
4. Reset one small visible section by hand. Collect identifiable litter with a grabber and lightly trim only reachable approved growth. Stay on secure footing and within the tools' capacity. Keep bags light enough for the actual handler. Stop when the next section cannot be inspected or the material changes.
5. Separate mowing from clearing. An inspected open field with suitable grass or light vegetation may be a mowing task; woody stems, roots, stumps, rocks, and buried rubbish require a different assessment. Show the operator the map and known hazards. The exact machine and cutter limits determine whether cutting is appropriate-never use a mower to find hidden objects.
6. Agree the machine finish before work starts. If you already have training and suitable equipment, use the current manuals and confirm site suitability before operating. Otherwise hire that portion. Record cutting limits, what remains on the ground, access, and haul-off; rough cutting does not create lawn, pasture quality, or construction-ready ground.
7. Revisit only after the work zone is released. Once the operator has finished and equipment is secured, inspect accessible ground for exposed concerns and remaining debris. Photograph the original viewpoints and decide on the next small phase. Do not assume everything newly visible can now be pulled out or driven over.

Common mistakes

Using a rotary cutter to discover rocks, wire, holes, or dumped rubbish / Removing useful screening or shade before deciding on the property's use / Assuming cut brush will be hauled away or that rough cutting restores a lawn / Starting more area than you can maintain afterward

Finish and aftercare

The agreed area is easier to inspect, ordinary rubbish has an accepted destination, and the map distinguishes completed work from remaining hazards. Cleanup does not resolve title, boundaries, contamination, or hidden conditions.

Photograph regrowth and keep a manageable maintenance area. Ask Extension to identify unfamiliar invasive plants or pasture concerns before treatment or grazing. Choose the next maintenance visit from actual growth and conditions, not a universal calendar.

[Full lesson, related tools and annotated sources](#)

Sources and further guidance

[Georgia 811: the before-you-diq process](#)

[Georgia 811: private utilities](#)

[Haralson County UGA Extension](#)

How to tackle small gravel touch-ups and yard restoration

Learn the manageable parts. Bring in help for the bigger pieces.

What this lesson covers

Choose a small, stable surface problem after the original contractor has finished and released the area. These hand-work steps do not cover deep holes, stump cavities, failed subgrade, septic repairs, structural pads, or changing drainage. A driveway repair and a lawn repair use different materials and finishes.

Before starting: know when to stop

- Stop if a hole deepens, ground moves or pumps underfoot, water repeatedly removes material, utilities are exposed, or a wall or foundation may be affected.
- Do not enter excavations, compact over unknown utilities or septic components, cover access lids, raise soil against siding, or alter the original contractor's unapproved work.
- If compaction equipment, excavation, grade changes, or structural support is needed, obtain a separate plan and competent help.

Tools and supplies

- Tape measure, straightedge for comparison, photographs, and original contractor's scope
- Gloves, sturdy footwear, eye protection, shovel and landscape rake suited to the material
- A manageable wheelbarrow or cart and supplier-confirmed material
- For a planting patch: the agreed seed or sod, suitable soil preparation tools, and a working watering arrangement

Effort and spending

Allow a separate inspection and measuring visit, then work in small loads. A very small surface touch-up may fit part of a day; carrying distance and lifting tolerance can dominate the effort. Soil settlement, planting establishment, and follow-up after rain take longer than the placement task.

Ask about minimum material quantities, delivery charges, and the unloading point. A small volume can still mean many heavy trips. Compare delivered material and a short hired placement job before committing to hand hauling. Do not buy topsoil to hide an unexplained depression.

Do some yourself, hire the rest

Keep: Records, measuring, small hand placement where suitable, planting within an agreed plan, watering, and photographs.

Hire: Assessed grading, material delivery and placement, deep or large restoration, suitable compaction, and hauling. Refer suspected plumbing or septic defects back to the responsible trade.

Handoff: Send original scope documents, inspection status, before-and-after photos, dimensions, and the desired stopping point: rough grade, gravel, seedbed, seed, or sod.

Seven practical steps

1. Confirm the handoff and cause. Check the first contractor's finish obligations, inspections, and warranty before doing work that might conceal or disturb the repair. Compare photographs before and after ordinary rain from safe ground. A recurring washout or settling trench is not just a shortage of gravel or soil.
2. Measure only the approved repair. For a simple rectangle, cubic yards equal length in feet × width in feet × depth in inches ÷ 324. A hypothetical 10-by-10-foot area with 1 inch of loose material is about 0.31 cubic yard; that is arithmetic, not a recommended depth. Confirm actual preparation, material, compaction allowance, and weight with the supplier.
3. Prepare the small surface. Remove only visible loose litter and unsuitable surface debris that can be handled safely. Protect nearby finishes and keep a clear carrying route. Do not dig out a depression, disturb a covered repair, or cut roots because the rake catches something.
4. For a gravel touch-up, match the existing job. On a confirmed stable surface, place the supplier-approved matching material in manageable amounts. Rake to the agreed existing profile without building a mound or blocking a drainage route. If material needs powered compaction or the surface cannot hold it, pause for the specified method rather than using passing vehicles as an improvised test.
5. For a shallow yard patch, agree the finish. Use the specified clean soil only where the cause and depth are understood. Lightly rake the small area to the surrounding approved grade, preserving drainage and access to services. Remove loose stones you can safely lift. Deep fill, stump-grinding backfill, or renewed settlement needs its own assessment.
6. Plant only when the surface and aftercare are ready. Choose seed or sod suited to the site and season with local guidance. Follow the seed label or sod supplier's directions for preparation, placement, covering, and watering. Test that the hose reaches before planting. Keep people and vehicles off the new surface as directed; more fertilizer or water is not automatically better.
7. Check the same place again. Photograph the finished area and inspect after ordinary rain and during establishment. Record rills, renewed dips, displaced stone, and bare patches. If the problem returns, stop repeatedly topping it off and ask for the underlying cause to be assessed.

Common mistakes

Confusing loose-volume arithmetic with a required gravel thickness / Covering continuing settlement or water damage with fresh material / Planting before resolving grading or arranging watering / Treating a small gravel pad as a certified foundation

Finish and aftercare

The agreed small surface is tidy, material quantities and handoff are recorded, and the correct person is responsible for aftercare. No concealed-trade warranty or long-term settlement guarantee transfers to the DIY work.

Check after weather and normal use without driving on unproven ground. Follow the planting supplier's care plan and seek help if settlement, drainage, or establishment differs from what was expected.

[Full lesson, related tools and annotated sources](#)

Sources and further guidance

- [FHWA: unpaved-road preparation](#)
- [UGA Extension: soil sampling for lawns, gardens, and wildlife food plots \(PDF\)](#)
- [Georgia 811: the before-you-dig process](#)
- [Georgia 811: private utilities](#)

How to decide whether to rent a skid steer or hire the equipment work

Learn the manageable parts. Bring in help for the bigger pieces.

What this lesson covers

This is a rental-readiness and job-planning lesson, not a skid-steer, mini-excavator, tractor, or attachment operating course. The do-it-yourself outcome can be a well-informed decision to keep the planning and finish work while hiring an operator. Reading this page does not establish competence.

Before starting: know when to stop

- Do not rent until utility and private-line questions, site access, ground stability, permissions, and any required design are settled.
- No operation without instruction and competence on the exact machine and attachment. Do not bypass interlocks, carry passengers, or work near unprotected bystanders.
- Do not improvise towing capacity, tie-downs, lifting, slope limits, work under raised equipment, or recovery of a stuck machine. Arrange the appropriate provider.

Tools and supplies

- Job sketch, dimensions, photographs, and a written finish description
- Gate, route, staging, and overhead-clearance measurements taken without approaching hazards
- Written rental quotation, exact machine and attachment models, and their current manuals
- A complete cost list and a comparable written quote for hired work

Effort and spending

Plan time for calls, site preparation, instruction, delivery or pickup, inspection, fuel, cleanup, and return-not only productive machine hours. A first-time renter should not book a tightly scheduled job on the assumption that learning happens instantly.

Compare the rental base charge, attachment, delivery or lawful transport, fuel, taxes, protection charges and exclusions, permitted hours, overtime, cleaning, consumables, and disposal. Add your time and a contingency you can actually afford. Use current supplier quotes, not the illustrative costs below.

Do some yourself, hire the rest

Keep: Project definition, measurements, current quote comparison, supplies, records, and suitable hand-work finishing.

Hire: Equipment operation, delivery, loading and hauling, or the larger ground-work portion. Moss & Sons confirms available machines, attachments, rentals, and any specialist involvement for each job.

Handoff: Send the desired result and access photos, not only a request for a particular machine. Ask for a separate price on the difficult portion while keeping the manageable parts yourself.

Seven practical steps

1. Describe the job without naming a machine first. Write the quantity, material, start and end points, route, and required finish. Moving loose topsoil, digging, cutting brush, and lifting a load are different tasks. Ask whether the requested result needs a design, a licensed trade, or more than one equipment type.
2. Check the whole route, not just the gate. Record access widths, turns, overhead constraints, staging, unloading, and the exit. Flag soft areas, buried systems, banks, wires, and structures without approaching hazards. Give the rental provider honest photos; a machine fitting through the entrance does not establish a safe work area.
3. Get the exact machine-and-attachment proposal. Ask the provider to confirm compatibility, required guarding, operating weight, rated capacities for the task, ground and clearance needs, and availability. Obtain the manuals and required instruction before deciding. A bucket, rock hound, grapple, and rotary cutter are not interchangeable just because they attach to a loader.
4. Compare like-for-like totals. Example only: a \$450 base rental plus \$150 delivery, \$60 fuel, and \$90 in other confirmed charges totals \$750 before labor, material, disposal, or overrun. These are invented planning numbers, not a supplier price. Compare that complete scope with a hired quote stating exactly what material handling and finish it includes.
5. Choose who transports and operates it. If vehicle ratings, loading, securement, or lawful transport are uncertain, obtain delivery instead of guessing. If instruction does not leave you competent for the actual task and site, hire a qualified operator. There is still useful DIY work in measuring, arranging material, and completing suitable hand finishing.
6. Set up a controlled handoff. Agree unloading, work limits, keeping people and pets out, and who can authorize changes. At delivery, inspect with the provider and document condition. Decline equipment with damaged or missing safeguards; never defeat a device to keep the day moving. Follow the exact manuals and provider's procedures for checks and use.
7. Plan the stop and return before beginning. Know whom to contact for damage, malfunction, or unsuitable conditions. Stop for changed ground or access and use the provider's recovery process. At the end, follow approved shutdown and cleaning instructions, photograph condition, and obtain the return record. Do not perform unfamiliar maintenance or crawl beneath raised equipment.

Common mistakes

Comparing a headline daily rental price with a complete contractor quote / Assuming an attachment, operator training, delivery, or extra hours is included / Treating a small machine as low risk / Spending the rental day solving access and utility questions that should have been settled beforehand

Finish and aftercare

A successful result is a documented, affordable plan with a suitable machine, competent operator, clear finish, and safe transport-or a decision not to rent. It is not a requirement to operate equipment yourself.

Keep rental and return records, inspect the property for new ruts or displaced material, and follow up on the agreed finish. Compare actual costs and time afterward so the next decision is based on experience rather than a guessed daily rate.

[Full lesson, related tools and annotated sources](#)

Sources and further guidance

[NIOSH: preventing skid-steer loader injuries \(PDF\)](#)

[Georgia 811: the before-you-dig process](#)

[Georgia 811: private utilities](#)