

Serene. Private. Peaceful.  
Beautiful. Custom made.  
Unique. Elegant. Magical.

All of these words can be used to describe the soon-to-open Hiwassee River Weddings and Events.

Hiwassee River Weddings and Events sits on a 19-acre peninsula bordered on three sides by water with 1,300 feet on the Hiwassee River. It is located on Moss Road in Delano right past the Mennonite Farm, just off of Highway 411 between Etowah and Benton.

Bill Collins, of Sweetwater, and his family bought the property in 2006 for recreation purposes.

“I was just going to put a little cabin down there on stilts for weekends,” he said.

Collins and his family are fans of the great outdoors.

“I’ve hunted and fished all over East Tennessee,” he said. “My family, 30 plus, would all gather at the river to picnic and camp for the weekend a few times a year. I’ve visited all the rivers around, but when I walked down here and explored it for the first time, it was the prettiest piece of property I had ever seen.”

After buying the property, Collins started tinkering around with an Alaskan sawmill, which later grew to a Woodmiser sawmill.

“I didn’t want to leave this place,” he said.

In 2010, Collins’ nephew was married on the property with a tent and chairs on the side of the river.

“Total strangers came up to me after telling me I should rent it out for weddings,” said Collins. “Six years later, we decided to go for it. With my sawmill and cutting the wood and seeing how pretty it was, I realized what I could build.”

And, build is exactly what Collins did. With the help of some local craftsmen and professionals, he put his vision for the property on paper and then created it from the ground up.

“I’ve not thrown it together,” he explained. “It’s a passion. I work down here every day along with local professionals, and we put our minds together and make things. I’ve taken great love in putting it together and it’s worked out really great.”

The 5,660-square-foot event center that now sits on the property was built using timbers cut off the land with Collins’ sawmill.

“It looks like a river castle,” said Collins. “All of it is sustainable and built from the land. It’s very elegant with massive custom metalwork all over it. It’s pretty cool.”

The magical setting provides a one-of-a-kind venue in Southeast Tennessee. Because of



By Jessica Kent  
*The Advocate & Democrat*

Photo: Nelya Photos, nelya.net

# Come Explore Hiwassee River Weddings and Events Venue



Photo by: Jason Arnold



Right: Bill Collins opens the doors to the timber event center.

Photo: Nelya Photos, nelya.net

the uniqueness and beauty of the timber event center and its location, Collins is already filling the calendar with brides and grooms booking for weddings. And, Hiwassee River Weddings and Events doesn't even officially open until May.

"Three brides contacted me yesterday and one this morning already," said Collins. "It's really something. Girls come out here to view it and they start crying. They grab their dad and stand there in awe; They say to me, 'Look I've got goosebumps.'"

The massive timber event center is heated and air conditioned, huge custom patio doors that lead to a patio overlooking the river, and a timber staircase outside that lead down to the lower river where there is a wedding deck. The event center is features the latest technology with dimmable LED lights, it is WiFi enabled, and has custom designs from the bottom up.

"It is quite a sight," said Collins.

The inside of the event center features a caterers' room, a groom's room, both men and women's restrooms, a grand entrance, a bridal room, and a large grand event area.

Collins even has a list of preferred vendors and photographers to suggest to people who book the event center.

The timber event center isn't limited to weddings, however.

"This could be a destination for corporate events as well," he said. "You could have your meeting, have lunch catered in and then have some great team building fun on the river. The event center could be used for a variety of parties and functions."

Eventually, Collins would like to add cabins along the river so people using the event center for bridal parties, families, or corporate events could stay on the property.

"That's Phase II," he said.

With more than 2,500 followers on Instagram, Hiwassee River Weddings and Events is making a name for itself before it even holds its first event.

"There's nothing like this on the river," said Collins. "It provides a state park like setting. It's a pretty magical place. It's funny, when brides come to tour the venue, they just don't want to leave and I feel exactly the same way."

Collins said he is excited for this new adventure.

"My family and I have been blessed from God with this land and the talented craftsman that have helped me build my vision," he said.

To schedule an appointment to view Hiwassee River Weddings and Events, contact Collins at 423-836-6681.

Their website is [hiwasseeriveweddings.com](http://hiwasseeriveweddings.com). You can also keep up with Hiwassee River Weddings and Events on their Facebook page Hiwassee River Weddings, or on Instagram @hiwasseeriverweddingsandevents.