

# Bear Paw

Block Number: 1

By Nora Worthen

On an old barn, facing west, sandwiched between Buck Creek and Lake Tahoma Road, you'll find a sky blue Bear Paw quilt block, which sits on what was formerly the Bill Gibbs farm. The Gibbs family men were big bear hunters, so when Alice Gibbs decided to give Smith, her husband, a quilt block for Christmas in 2007, she chose the "Bear Paw" design. Alice personally designed, built, and painted the 4x4 foot square block in her basement in the evenings after work without Smith ever suspecting.

As you view the Bear Paw, each 'paw' is divided by a ribbon of red into quadrants of blue, the same as a blue sky, with a lighter background. On a clear day, the sky blue block contrasted with the gray weathered boards of the old barn appears to be a splotch of blue paint from the sky above. Along with the barn, are other outbuildings, including a springhouse built of stone, where the earlier occupants of the farm cooled their watermelons on hot summer days. In the green pastures that surround this peaceful setting, with the varying colors of the wooded area in the background, and hearing the flowing waters of Buck Creek trickling over the rocks, one can lose one's self and imagine what life was like on this farm 100 years earlier.

Smith and Alice Gibbs have enjoyed the tradition of quilting in their families, owning several quilts made by their mothers and grandmothers. Smith often told Alice of the quilt blocks he saw and admired as he traveled to and from Boone. It was this interest and admiration for the quilt blocks that gave Alice the idea to build and gift to her husband the first quilt block on the McDowell Quilt Trail.

