

Wildewood Owners Association (WOA) 2025 Update Newsletter

Welcome New Property Owners!

Welcome to all new Property Owners! Many Wildewood properties changed hands in 2024. Remember- please provide your email and telephone number to the Board so you can keep up with everything that's going on in Wildewood!



Where does my money go?

Every year when it's time for property owners to pay their assessment fees, the same question surfaces, "Where does my money go?" Wildewood's income from assessments (HOA fees) is approximately \$42,000/year. Keep in mind that Wildewood's fees have not been increased since 2006, while all the costs continue to increase.

Every Wildewood property owner (whether you previously realized this or not), is a partial owner of all the common areas in Wildewood. So, the short answer to "Where does my money go?" is that it goes to maintain **your** common areas and keep them insured.

Insurance is an expensive fact of life and WOA's insurance costs for property and liability insurance for the common areas and the Association and board are currently over \$10,000 per year and increase every year. Efforts are made each year to find coverage for less but as you've probably seen and heard on the news, insurance is becoming increasingly hard to get, and it's nearly impossible to find lower premiums.

Streetlights in 46 locations in Wildewood are funded by WOA and cost nearly \$6,000 dollars per year. Office costs such as paper, postage, post office box and website amount to \$1,500 per year and are required to meet WOA's obligations to communicate with you, the property owners.

Mowing the entrance, pool, park, community center and boat ramp twice monthly from April to October cost \$4,200 in 2024.

Common Area Costs – the remainder of the money goes to routine operating costs such as water, electricity, pool chemicals and maintenance/repairs/updates to the boat ramp, community center, park and pool. Dead trees that must be removed for safety reasons are one example of a maintenance cost that has been increasing each year.

Five years of progress – Since 2019 your fees have been used to accomplish a tremendous number of updates, repairs and improvements. Here's a recap:

Boat Ramp and Fishing Pier

- Boards replaced as needed
- Hazardous dead trees removed
- Gate rebuilt after being hit by truck and trailer
- New lock and keys acquired, to be installed in March 2025
- Parking lot area fenced (Thank You donors!)

- Signage updated

Community Center

- Cameras installed due to break-ins & damage during rentals
- French drain and berm installed to prevent water runoff during rain from entering the Community Center.
- Interior door replaced, broken toilet replaced and entire interior repainted
- Interior redecorated and new window coverings installed to assist in noise control
- New outdoor security lights
- Flat roofs over the bathrooms and offices/storage rooms replaced
- Sheetrock replaced in hall due to flood damage
- Two new mini-split systems installed to replace 50-year-old HVAC (heating and air) system

Entrance Sign

- Attractive new sign installed into the frame
- New lights installed on the sign and at the intersection of Wildewood and FM 315
- Sign framework and flagpole were rebuilt and repainted after fire damage

Neighborhood Cleanup Days

- Since 2020 dumpsters have been provided one day each year to allow Wildewood residents to dispose of items that cannot go in their normal trash pickup such as building materials, tires, and old furniture. In 2024, 120 cubic yards of debris and 40 tires were collected and removed from the neighborhood
- Scrap metal has been collected separately each year and recycled

Park area

- Broken welds on playground equipment repaired
- Hazardous trees removed
- Signs indicating “No motor vehicles” installed
- Wildewood’s 50th anniversary party held here (Thank you volunteers and attendees!)

Pool

- Bathrooms and deck area cleaned daily by contract labor (Thank you to our great workers!)
- Camera system installed to deter vandalism and ensure proper use of the facility
- Chlorinator replaced
- Deck area cracks filled and caulked
- Electronic key fob system installed to provide controlled self-serve access to pool area
- Enhanced gate self-closing mechanism installed
- Filter valve rebuilt (done twice)
- Pool interior stripped down to the gunite and replastered and all fittings such as skimmers, ladders & handrails replaced
- Posts replaced on gazebos and building roof patched after tree limb damage
- Sand filter repacked with 600 lbs. of sand (done twice)
- Septic system refurbished and tree roots removed; system pumped annually to ensure proper operation
- Secure non-metallic storage for pool chemicals provided
- Updated safety equipment including life rings, emergency phone and signage

- Volunteer Certified Pool Operator checks water chemistry daily during pool season using accurate digital meter instead of test strips
- Donations – Thank you donors!
 - New pool furniture
 - New variable speed efficient pool pump
 - Digital water testing meter

WOA's financial statements are provided at every meeting and are always available to any property owner upon request. Financials for 2024 are provided on the last page of this newsletter.



Five Years of Progress - Abandoned Properties

While these lots are not part of the WOA common areas, they affect all property owners because they can be “attractive nuisances” if there are unsecured structures present, they are unsightly and they don't pay any HOA fees. In a perfect world, WOA would simply foreclose on all of them, sell them and “poof” problem solved. In reality, it's much more complicated than that. In most cases, the amount of past due taxes and the legal fees incurred in performing a foreclosure exceed the value of the property. In general, if WOA foreclosed on these properties, it would take a substantial financial loss on each property.

Instead of foreclosing directly, WOA pursues other options:

- In some cases, WOA can find owners and facilitate sales of the properties
- If there is a mortgage, the mortgage company can foreclose and sell the property
- In many cases, WOA works closely with the taxing entities (Henderson County and Brownsboro Independent School District (BISD)) to encourage them to foreclose on properties in Wildewood.
 - Tax foreclosure is not the perfect solution. It takes a long time and often results in properties being sold to investors who are reluctant to improve them but instead want to resell them to others.
 - Overall tax foreclosure, it is a benefit to Wildewood because the buyers do keep the HOA fees current and, in most cases, the properties are eventually sold to owners who refurbish them and live in them or use them as rental properties.

Since 2019 here is what's been accomplished (addresses are not provided to protect new property owners' privacy):

- Mortgage foreclosure completed and property resold – **5 lots** total on Wildewood and Sierra
- Tax foreclosures completed and property sold to owners who occupy them or are preparing to do so - **8 lots** total on Wildewood, Old Fort and Big Bend
- Tax foreclosure complete, investors are working on reselling - **8 lots** total on Knotty Pine, Old Fort and Big Bend
- Owners were located and property sold to new owners and occupied by new owners or tenants- **6 lots** total on Wildewood, Springwood and Knotty Pine
- Owners were located and lots were sold to owners of neighboring properties- **4 lots** total on Springwood and Old Fort
- Tax foreclosures completed and awaiting sale date by Henderson County or BISD - **5.5 lots** total on Old Mission, Old Fort and Knotty Pine. Note: When these lots come up for sale, WOA will send out notifications to WOA property owners.

- Tax foreclosure in process but not complete - *1 lot* total on Big Bend
- Tax foreclosure not yet started because tax balances are not high enough-these we continue to encourage taxing entities to start the process - *4 lots* total Old Mission and Knotty Pine

This represents **36.5 lots** (those listed in **bold** above) that have been returned to the tax rolls and are paying their HOA assessments to WOA. There are an additional *5 lots* (those listed in *italics* above) that we continue to pursue.

What about the next five years?



Finances

Wildewood has not increased the amount of the assessments (HOA fees) since 2006. Think about how much your costs have increased since then and WOA is no different, its costs increase every year.

In the past, Wildewood always had a paid bookkeeper and paid someone for doing the pool operations. Due to financial constraints, those positions were eliminated several years ago. WOA has remained financially stable and been operating in a break-even fashion only because it has depended heavily on volunteer labor for the pool and the bookkeeping.

Our pool operations volunteer, Jack Downing, has dedicated an enormous amount of time since 2019 to keeping the pool operations running smoothly and safely, but it's time WOA lessens its dependence on one person. Given the lack of volunteers to assist, the solution appears to be hiring contract labor to assist during the busier times when the pool is open during the summer.

The pool is typically WOA's second biggest annual cost after insurance. See the last page of this newsletter for an overview of WOA's 2024 income and expenses. As the organization works to determine the best way forward financially, one potential alternative to raising assessment fees is to collect an amenities fee from those families who desire to use the pool. This would generate additional revenue to fund pool expenses without affecting those who do not use the pool. To gauge the membership's interest in such a proposal, a survey has been included with this newsletter. If you would like to complete the survey online, you can use this link [2025 Pool Survey](#) or request the link by texting 903-202-094 or emailing wildewoodboard@gmail.com. If you prefer to complete the hard copy of the survey, it's included with your newsletter. You can return it with your 2025 payment. Please send your survey responses by January 31.

It's no secret that the pool is a divisive topic in Wildewood. For some property owners, it's a great benefit of living in Wildewood and to others, it's considered a complete waste of money. This leaves WOA in a situation where no matter what choices are made, some property owners will disagree. Please complete the survey and make your voice heard, and please be civil in your responses.

Governing Documents

Wildewood's governing documents including the restrictions, bylaws and rules (legally known as the "Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions" (CC&R)) can be found on the website www.wildewoodliving.com under Documents. These documents were written in 1977 and have had only minor revisions since then. In some cases, the documents do not include items now commonly included for newer subdivisions, do not adequately address today's world, or conflict with the Texas

Property Code. This causes confusion because the Property Code overrules WOA's documents. Examples of questions that commonly come up:

- Is there a requirement for dogs to remain on the owner's property? (not mentioned in CC&R, required by County)
- Are tiny homes permitted? (current minimum home size is 600 sq ft per the CC&R)
- Can WOA stop people from voting if their fees are not current? (no per the property code which takes precedence, yes per the bylaws)
- Can WOA 'force mow' people's properties and then charge them for it? (yes, per the restrictions, no per Property Code unless a months long and specific notification process is followed in advance)

Please read the restrictions and bylaws and consider what changes could be proposed that would make Wildewood a better place for everyone. Modifying these documents requires guidance from legal counsel to ensure that current state laws are accurately represented but the first step will be to ask for feedback from the property owners, so please give these documents your consideration.

Upcoming Maintenance Projects

Long-range planning includes the need to complete the following projects as well as be prepared for unseen expenses:

- Shingle roofs on community center and pool roofs are nearing the end of their useful lives
- Plumbing in pool bathrooms has corrosion and needs to be repaired
- Vanities and sinks in community center and pool bathrooms are in poor condition and need to be updated
- Flooring in community center hall and bathrooms needs updating
- Playground equipment needs to be cleaned, repaired and painted and in some cases replaced
- Parking lot for community center needs road base added and parking area leveled
- Area beyond boat ramp needs to be dredged and made deeper to allow boat ramp to be used when water is low



WOA currently retains approximately \$25,000 in capital reserves, separate from the day-to-day operating expenses to be allocated for these major expenses.

What else is going on?



Community Center

After its facelift and new HVAC system in 2024, the Community Center is now a wonderful place to host your baby shower, birthday party or other event. Rental is \$50 per day with a \$50 refundable security deposit. You can reserve your date by contacting board members:

- Debbie Martin - blouy21@startmail.com 903 386 3365 or
- Shannon Reed - scarroll66@gmail.com 972-695-9729

Text them both for the fastest response!

Boat Ramp – New Keys coming in 2025 – Please Read if you use the Boat Ramp!



Due to the age of the lock, the keys for the boat ramp have been discontinued by the manufacturer. As a result, the lock will be changed on Monday March 31, 2025. New keys will be issued to members in good standing at the Community Center prior to that date. Signs with detailed information will be posted as the date grows near. There will be no charge for the new key but if lost, there will be a \$20 fee for a replacement key. When using the boat ramp, please be sure the gate is always locked and remember that for safety reasons, swimming is not permitted at the boat ramp which was designed and built for boat launch and fishing purposes only.

Neighborhood Cleanup



Cleanup day is proving to be a remarkable success. In 2024, we filled up a total of 4 big 30-yard dumpsters as well as collecting several trailer loads of scrap metal and 40 tires. We don't know yet what the 2025 cleanup will look like, so please contact a board member if you have suggestions.

Many properties have been cleaned up, but more work remains to be done. Please be sure your property is clear of:

- Abandoned cars
- Trash and appliances
- Tall weeds and grass on your property or in the right of way in front of it

If you need assistance cleaning up your property, please contact a Board member. WOA owns a walk-behind string trimmer that can be checked out by property owners who would like to use it on their lots.

Pets



Please be a good neighbor! Texas law requires all dogs and cats have current rabies vaccinations. Dogs must be kept on your property or on a leash, per the Henderson County Animal Control Ordinance. Animal shelters and rescues in the area are overflowing with homeless animals. Please spay/neuter dogs



and cats to prevent contributing to the problem. There are a variety of low-cost spay/neuter options as well as low-cost vaccination clinics in the area.

- [Animal Protection League](#) (903) 753-7387 visits many locations in East Texas
- [Dehart Veterinary Services](#) (903) 590-7722 visits many locations in East Texas
- [SPCA Snippet Clinic](#) (903) 592-7705 (not currently offering surgery but keep checking)

A link to the Henderson County Animal Control Ordinance is available on the WOA website under Helpful links.

Wildewood Entrance Sign and Lighting



Reminder – WOA maintains 46 streetlights in Wildewood. These are the lights where the light faces the street. Lights who face someone's house are private. If you notice one of the lights maintained by WOA is out, please contact a board member.

Communications – How do we keep you updated?

- Postal mail – newsletters sent with invoices in January and the election ballots in May
- Email – we send regular updates. If we don't have an email address for you, **please provide an email address to wildewoodboard@gmail.com or (903) 202-0964** so we can add you to the list. **Meeting notices** are sent via email and posted on the website.
- Website – regular updates are posted to the website **www.wildewoodliving.com** under **News**. If you do not have an email address or cannot access the website and would like hard copies of the newsletter, please contact us and we can arrange to have them dropped off for you.



Board of Directors Meetings

Property owners are welcome and encouraged to attend board meetings. Please check the website www.wildewoodliving.com for meeting notices or ask to be added to the email list by emailing the board at wildewoodboard@gmail.com. Meetings are currently being held face-to-face with a virtual option also provided.

To increase income, the Board has been working with delinquent property owners to ensure all property owners are paying their fair share. *Thank you!* to those who have gotten their balances paid up or are currently working on payment plans, it is greatly appreciated. Having the extra income from past due balances is helpful but as the overdue amounts dwindle, that source of income will cease.

The Board is interested in your input and appreciates hearing what the property owners would like to do to maintain WOA's future financial health and its ability to provide services to the property owners.

Wildewood Financials as of 12-10-24

2024 Wildewood Income and Expenses				
Income				
		Maintenance Fees	42,800	
		Other income (CC rental, Interest, Transfer fees, TVEC refunds, misc.)	1659	
	Total Income		44,459	
Expense				
		Community Center		
		Electricity		1139
		Water		714
		Repairs & Supplies		8061
		CC Total	9914	
		Entrance Sign	283	
		Insurance	10,570	
		Mowing	4200	
		Neighborhood Cleanup	2872	
		Office Supplies, Property Taxes and misc. expenses	2008	
		Pier & Boat Ramp	989	
		Playground	400	
		Pool		
		Electricity		1067
		Water		1502
		Chemicals		2425
		Repairs & Supplies		2300
		Housekeeping Labor		1700
		Pool Total	8996	
		Security Lights	5725	
	Total Expense		45,957	
Net Income			-1,498	

Bank Balances – Simmons Bank Chandler		
Operations (Day-to-day expenses)	Checking	\$12,000
Reserve Fund	Savings	\$9,353
Reserve Fund	CD 1	\$5,162
Reserve Fund	CD 2	\$5,162
Reserve Fund	CD 3	\$5,171