

# Whitewater Springs Newsletter

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## **WHITEWATER SPRINGS SECURITY:**

Property owners are issued a gate code to gain access to the community. If you have not been issued a code and want one, please contact our answering service at (512) 756-5206. When you contact the answering service, please give them your email address so that WWS Security can respond in writing.

Occasionally someone will try to open the gate with their code and it will not open. Since we changed the call box at the gate several years ago, the issued codes will open the gate as long as the proper sequence is followed. When a code is issued, instructions are given to press the pound (#) key first and without hesitation enter your code numbers. If you hesitate, the box will go back to the scroll mode. If this happens and the first three numbers of you code match an index code of a current resident, the box will ring the phone in that resident's house.

The first reaction when the gate does not open is to say "My code does not work!" WWS Security assures you that your code will work when entered properly. You should make sure you have followed the proper key sequence and not hesitated after pressing the pound (#) key.

A call recently came in to say that a newly issued code did not work and that the property owner's name does not appear in the display window on the box. It turns out that the sequence was not used correctly.

As far as the property owner's name appearing in the display window, only resident names are displayed. Every property owner's name with a gate code is in the control box. When an owner builds a house and has a WWS home phone number, their name will appear in the display window. With the name in the window, by pressing the "call" button, the owner's phone will ring. When the owner answers the phone and identifies the person at the gate, the owner can press the "9" button on their home phone and open the gate.

## **LOCAL RECYCLING:**

Did you know there are locations in Bertram where we can take our household recycling? They will accept glass, plastic (#1 and #2 only), tin or aluminum cans, paper (newspaper, magazines, mail, but not telephone books), and corrugated cardboard. Please rinse containers and remove lids; crushing of plastics and cans is appreciated, but not mandatory.

Locations: go across the railroad tracks to the north end of West Street, which is 2 blocks west of the traffic light on Hwy 29, and just beyond the Church of Christ to a large aluminum tank that says "RECYCLE". Also, paper-only recycling for which students benefit by earning a fee can be taken to either the dumpster at the elementary school or behind the old Smoke Haus location at the traffic light.

## **OAK WILT and VEGETATION CLEARING:**

Remember that to prevent the spread of oak wilt, we should not prune susceptible oaks (Live, Spanish, and Shumard here in central Texas) between February 1st and June 1st. If we notice a new wound or fallen branch in these trees during this time, experts recommend that we apply pruning paint to the wound, if possible.

Also, to be in compliance with our Endangered Species Permit, we cannot clear vegetation in or within 300 feet of the designated Golden-Cheeked Warbler Habitat from March 1st to August 1st. If you are not sure whether your lot is affected by this, please contact [wwsfirewise@yahoo.com](mailto:wwsfirewise@yahoo.com).

When you need to dispose of brush or cut trees, you have several options: have them chipped for mulch or have them hauled away, take them to our designated burn site, or burn on your own lot. We do recommend that instead of burning yourself, you take the brush to our burn site to be burned by fire professionals from the Refuge staff. If you do decide to burn in a safe location on your lot, you must have water available and follow the WWS Outdoor Burning Guidelines, which are posted inside the entry gate.

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU BUILD, RENOVATE, OR CONSTRUCT ANYTHING ON YOUR PROPERTY:**

Are you planning to start building your home, renovate the exterior, park a boat, RV or trailer on your lot, or add anything such as a fence, play set, storage shed, flag pole, or other improvements? If so, you need to be aware of important requirements.

On our website in the "Property Owner's Information" section, are forms that need to be completed and approved by the Architectural Control Committee before work is initiated on any new construction or improvements. Please allow up to 30 days for ACC approval.

Go to the "Building Procedures" section for instructions, the required application form for approval of your plans from the ACC, and the two responsibility forms for both you and your contractor to sign. Be sure to submit all the completed forms and documents in one package as soon as they are finalized in order to minimize delays in your approval. If you are not familiar with WWS deed restrictions, please review the "Covenants" sections.

For new home construction, additional items that must also be submitted are: complete set of plans with elevations, plat of house on lot showing distances from perimeter of lot, septic plans and copy of septic permit, and the \$1500 road impact fee - 7 items in all. Also, because we are an official Firewise Community/USA, please review the Firewise Construction and Landscaping Checklists.

**FERAL HOGS AND DEER:**

All statements in this article are from publications and presentations by, or conversations with, wildlife experts from Texas Parks & Wildlife, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, The Nature Conservancy, and Texas A & M University.

Unfortunately, we do have feral hogs here in WWS. They can cause considerable damage. Their rooting and wallowing causes loss of soil and damage to vegetation. This can also devastate riparian habitat areas along creeks. They carry many diseases and parasites that threaten other mammals and they are predators of many types of wildlife. Females with young or wounded hogs can be especially dangerous to people. Their razor sharp tusks combined with their lightning speed can cause serious injury.

Feeding activities of feral hogs have a negative effect on availability of food for other wildlife.

Feral hogs have a highly developed sense of smell and out-compete deer and turkeys for acorns and other food, including deer corn. Many of us have seen increased feral hog activity in WWS recently. According to wildlife experts, this can be due to the increased use of deer feeders here. In fact, deer begin to avoid feeders and corn set out for them after feral hogs have fed there.

Many people moving to the country from cities initially feed the deer because they want to attract them to their property. But they realize too late that there are many problems associated with this. According to Chuck Sexton, Wildlife Biologist at the Balcones Canyonlands NWR, "Deer populations in the Texas Hill Country are historically and notoriously high. Much research has shown that high deer populations are having long-term negative effects on the structure and composition of woodlands by reducing or eliminating the regeneration of hardwoods, principally oaks. Supplemental feeding by landowners, either for general wildlife viewing or for sport, is a major cause in sustaining artificially high deer herds". Deer feeders concentrate the damage to native and landscape plants around that area - overbrowsing occurs for many acres around deer feeders.

Advice from a recent publication put out jointly by Texas Parks & Wildlife and The Nature Conservancy says, "DO NOT FEED THE DEER. Supplemental feed will only increase the number of deer in the neighborhood. As over-abundant white-tailed deer reduce the health of native plant communities, other wildlife species can become less common. Over-abundant herds have deer-health problems such as starvation, increased numbers of parasites and more disease."

Wildlife experts also tell us there is no need to put out water for deer in a drought. They always know where the local water sources are, and giving them water and food makes them more familiar with people, less afraid of us, and brings them closer to our homes. Why is that a problem? "Over-abundant deer in close proximity to people also cause concerns such as:

- Automobile accidents from deer collisions or drivers trying to avoid deer
- Severe damage to landscaping (even 'deer-resistant or deer-proof' plants)
- Buck (male) deer that are unafraid of people can be dangerous during the breeding season (fall and winter)
- Increased numbers of disease-causing agents such as ticks carrying Lyme's disease

- Deer feeding resulting in more reproduction and further aggravation of all over-abundant deer concerns."

Corn is not a healthy food for deer. Due to a high carbohydrate content and less protein than they require, it's known as "Beer for Deer". Aflatoxin mold is present in deer corn. It will not kill the deer, but definitely weakens them, especially if they have parasites. Unfortunately, birds often eat leftover corn, and they are harmed by much lower concentrations of aflatoxin than deer. Turkeys, cardinals and white-winged doves have all been highly impacted by aflatoxin. Deer who have a diet of mostly corn have been shown to develop malnutrition, acidosis (which makes them unable to digest food), and liver disease.

Many local communities in the Texas Hill Country have had to face the difficult decision of what to do with their large, unhealthy herds of tame deer. Unfortunately, there are only a few options available, and they are very expensive for the communities. Excess deer are either killed to be used as food for prisons and food banks, or are trapped and transported elsewhere. Because there is no longer good habitat in the Hill Country to take these deer, some of them are even transported to Mexico. At WWS, we are somewhat more fortunate, because the periodic hunts at the Refuge help control the size of our herd. We just need to do our part and not tame the deer by feeding them and the feral hogs. We should also try to use native and deer-resistant plants as much as possible.

#### **25 MPH:**

The speed limit within Whitewater Springs is 25 MPH. Even this speed may be too high in some areas of the development.

We've been very fortunate that we have had no accidents on our roads. There have been some close calls, however; usually because the driver was suddenly blinded by the sun or was looking at our beautiful landscape without keeping an eye out for possible oncoming traffic. Speed has also played a part in some of these near misses.

As we grow we will inevitably have more traffic here and it will become even more important that we adhere to the 25 MPH speed limit. We are a gated community with private roads. It is up to each of us to drive safely and be aware at all times of the possibility of meeting someone going in the opposite direction.

#### **CUSTODIAL CARE OF YOUR DOLLARS:**

The Whitewater Springs POA Team is cognizant of the responsibility you have placed in their hands when it comes to the allocation of the assessments you pay. The following is a step-by-step procedure that is followed:

- \* An assessment is deposited in the bank upon receipt

- \* Two copies of the check are made. One goes to our Finance Chairman for record-keeping purposes; the other is kept on file by a member of the official board.

- \* Checks written to pay bills require signatures of two official board members

- \* The monthly statement is given to the Finance Chairman unopened and an audit of all expenditures is completed.

There is a "petty cash" envelope kept by an official board member. Expenditures of less than \$20 can be taken from this envelope. A receipt must be provided and the provider then signs the cash book indicating they have received a refund. This account is also audited.

Careful consideration is given to each dollar spent and must stand the test of benefiting all property owners.

#### **SPRING BARBECUE:**

We'll have a spring BBQ on Saturday, May 17, 2008, starting at 4:00 pm in the pavilion at the park. The BBQ meat will be cooked by local residents for a donation at the "door". Everyone is invited. Bring a side dish or dessert and your drink of choice. Please RSVP the number of people coming by May 10th to Lucy Morley at [l.morley@hughes.net](mailto:l.morley@hughes.net) so we can make sure to have enough meat and utensils for everyone. The swimming pool will be open and you are invited to brave the cool waters.

#### **SUMMER WATER AEROBICS:**

Our water aerobics instructor, Peggy Blend, will be available to lead our third annual Water Aerobics Class at the WWS pool on Wednesday afternoons at 5:30, beginning May 7 and lasting for approximately 15 weeks. The cost will be \$45 for the season. For guests and residents who can attend only a portion of the summer, the cost will be \$5 each day. Bring your water shoes, noodles, and water weights if you have them and join in the fun!

Please RSVP to Margaret Thomson at [marlan@hughes.net](mailto:marlan@hughes.net).

#### **ROAD CONSTRUCTION AT WHITEWATER SPRINGS:**

Reconstruction of our roads at WWS takes a significant portion of the monies that we all pay in POA dues. I thought that an explanation of why we have to reconstruct our roads and what we are actually doing might be helpful.

**Background:** The roads that were put in here, especially by the second developer and to some degree by the original developer are totally inferior. Any available fill material (including loam) was used for sub-base material and then it was covered with good base material but not to the proper specifications. The contractor who did the work was a driveway paving contractor and used equipment designed for that purpose NOT for paving roads that would be used by trucks hauling concrete and other materials for building homes.

Burnet County has specifications for subdivision roads but there are numerous errors and omissions in the specs. Two attempts to correct and strengthen these specs have not rectified the problem (including one in 2007). Further, Burnet County has no way to enforce any specifications other than through visual inspection when the work is being done. They do not have any way to test roads or even any engineering personnel to understand what should be done.

As a result most of our streets are destroyed when only one house is built on them. We also have numerous springs that pop-up in the middle of our roads that will pot hole a road over night.

**In Need of a Better Approach:** In 2004 we started looking for a better way of handling our roads and went out for bids to reconstruct Ashe Juniper Way. We picked this road since it had been a road that was "fixed" under warranty several times and kept failing. We secured an "extended" warranty through the developer and used that money to "fix it right". Most of the bids we got reflected standard road construction practices - remove existing material down to a certain point, install and compact sub-base and base materials to proper specifications and then install chip-and-seal or hot mix asphalt as a surface.

We did receive one bid that represented an approach that would allow recycling of the existing materials in place. This is the cement stabilization process that we eventually selected. It was competitive with the other bids and would potentially fix other problems, such as springs, as well.

**Cement Stabilization:** The process involves laying down a layer of powdered cement on the

road followed by grinding the cement with water into the old road down to a depth of approx. 8". The stabilized material is then rolled and compacted to achieve proper density. After approximately two days the surface is micro-fractured with a vibratory steel roller. It is then primed and coated with two coats of chip-and-seal using an asphalt emulsion and non-dusting dolomite rock. If the final paved surface is 20 feet wide then the subsurface is recycled to 22 feet. The equipment used is heavy duty road construction equipment not driveway paving equipment.

**Our Experience:** We have now completed four years of recycling and are completely satisfied with the process. Roads that have been recycled in addition to Ashe Juniper include Murphy Dr (2005), Oak Crest (2006), Spring Hollow (2007) and portions of Whitewater Dr. Small sections of other roads have also been recycled to fix pot holes and soft spots.

We try to divert all construction traffic to roads that have been recycled.

To date we've seen NO failures and only very limited cosmetic repairs have been made, primarily to the radius' at intersections where trucks tend to scarify the surface when they turn. This year we will begin a maintenance cycle to Ashe Juniper by adding one additional coat of chip-and-seal. This should preclude any additional maintenance for 10 years. The other roads will receive a similar treatment at their 4 year anniversary.

We've also used the same cement stabilization process to "cap" springs on Whitewater Drive. We can't stop the springs but the cap redirects the water to the ditches and prevents a pot hole from forming in the road. Again this has been very successful.

Similarly, we are fixing our ditches by mixing cement in with the ditch material and re-sculpting the ditch. This was experimental and we now feel we have established the right concentration of cement and the correct shape for the ditch.

**Future:** We've got almost 11 Miles of paved roads currently and a little over 3 miles have been totally recycled. At current costs and 2007 budget allocation that would mean another 10+ years before all of our roads could be fixed. Therefore the POA board recommended an increase in assessments to bring that plan down to hopefully 5 years. Costs continue to rise (due primarily to rising petroleum costs) and we expect that it will be 50% higher this year than when we started in 2004.

**We have also insisted that the new roads in Section 2 & 5 be completed to the same specs that we are using for the recycled roads.**

**If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.**

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