

WILDWOOD HIGHLANDER SUMMER 2014

The *Wildwood Highlander* is a periodic newsletter providing information to property owners in Wildwood Highlands, near Datil, NM. Hard copy is mailed to all owners. Published at least annually in Datil, NM by the Wildwood Highlands Landowners' Association, POB 87, Datil NM 87821-0087. For further information contact any member of the WHLA Board of Directors (BoD), listed below. Also consult the WHLA website at www.wildwoodhighlands.org

2014 ANNUAL MEETING: The 2014 WHLA annual meeting was held on 17 May at the Datil Well Campground Pavilion, starting at approximately 10 AM MDT. Attendance was again slim, as it usually is when there are no contentious issues afloat. Full details are in the meeting minutes, posted on the website. Highlights were:

- ✧ Total lots represented (including ballots submitted by mail) were only 18, whereas the 94 lots whose owners were in good standing at the time required a quorum of 47, so the initial called meeting was closed and a second, requiring a quorum of 24, was called. Still lacking a quorum, a third meeting was called.
- ✧ Most of the discussions centered on roads, roads maintenance, roads improvements, and the Firewise program.
- ✧ The two current BOD members on the ballot (John Kell and Fred Shepherd) were re-elected.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING 17 MAY: The "new" Board met immediately following the general meeting. The only business conducted was the election of officers. All members retained their previous positions (see list with contact information on last page). Meeting minutes are posted on the website. The next meeting will be on July 13th.

NEW NEW MEXICO HOMEOWNER ASSOCIATION STATUTE:

Board President Tom Cook distills the essence of a new state law as follows:

The Homeowner Association Act and Us

During the 2013 legislative session an act (SB 497) was passed that affects us as an association and each of us individually. It provides for the disclosure of association records to the landowners and the disclosure of landowner association records to purchasers of lots.

The act requires that the association record a notice with (in our case) the Catron County Clerk. The notice contains information concerning the articles of incorporation, recording of subdivision plat, and the declaration regarding the governing of the lots within the subdivision. Our secretary has filed this notice with the county clerk.

Section 5 of the act requires that the association disclose certain records to the membership. Much of what is cited in this section has already been made available on our web site. In the next few weeks we will be updating the web site to include all of the required information.

The act affects us individually in that it requires that a “person selling a lot that is subject to an association shall provide in writing a disclosure certificate that states that the lot is located within a development that is subject to an association”. It further states that the seller must provide the disclosure certificate to the buyer no later than seven days prior to closing and the purchaser has the right to cancel the purchase contract within seven days after receiving the disclosure certificate. “Cancellation shall be without penalty, and all payments made by purchaser before cancellation shall be refunded within fifteen days.” The disclosure certificate is to be provided by the association (within ten days of a request by a lot owner) and it contains much of the same information that the association filed with the county clerk.

The full act became effective on July 1, 2013, and can be found at www.nmlegis.gov/sessions under: 13 Regular, Final, SB497.

UPDATE ON THE “GREAT WATER STEAL”: *This update on the situation is by Board member Amber McIntosh, now also on the SAWC board of directors.*

The San Agustin Water Coalition is working on a new website. While under construction please check www.sanagustinwatercoalition.org and watch for details on how to stay informed on the latest news pertaining to the protest of the Augustin Plains Ranch, LLC application to pump the equivalent of ½ of Albuquerque’s annual water consumption from our aquifer each year. The website will include details on our geology, legal timeline, how to join the coalition, and what you can do to protest water mining in our county.

Remember our property values are based on the availability of groundwater and ability to drill domestic wells. This WILL change if this project is allowed to go through so it is in the interest of every property owner in Catron County to defeat this proposal.

ROAD REPORT: *Vice-President Fred Shepherd reports -*

This spring we had most of the roads graded which are listed in our Five Year Plan for spring maintenance. We also purchased and had spread three belly dump loads of base course material. Our problem continues to be the severe drought. Road maintenance is difficult when there is no moisture in and under the road bed to facilitate packing of the

material as traffic moves across the roads. What happens is that the fine material, which actually locks the gravel and stone in place, blows off the road. The result is that the washboard sections are back to washboard after a few days. Let's all hope that we have a good monsoon this year.

THE DROUGHT GOES ON: *Our local weather man Chuck Baker reports -*

WILDWOOD HIGHLANDS 2014 MID-YEAR WEATHER REVIEW AS OF JUNE 10TH

We've had a relatively mild winter in 2014 with minimal snowfall and warmer temps compared to both January-March of 2013 and the long-term average. Spring 2014 has so far been just slightly cooler and wetter than the same period last year, but those cooler temps and precipitation were in the first half of spring and since mid-May we've seen a return to a more seasonal pattern (i.e. hot and dry). Winds are about average so far in 2014, with a peak gust of 54mph recorded on May 11th, and many days with peak gusts in the 30-40mph range, but that is what we normally see both in the spring and the fall, our windiest seasons. Lately it has been extremely dry with relative humidity levels often in the single digits and on a few occasions has been recorded as low as 1%, which is pretty much the threshold of what can be measured. The following table depicts 2014 compared with both 2013 and the long-term average for the period 2000-2013.

	2014	2013	2000-2013 Average
Jan precip -	0	.20" total (1" snow)	.54" total (4.4" snow)
Feb precip -	.32" (3.5" snow)	.20" total (3.5" snow)	.50" total (4.2" snow)
Mar precip -	.24"	.20" total (2.25" snow)	.47" total (3.57" snow)
Apr precip -	.07"	.05" total (1" snow)	.47" total (.59" snow)
May precip -	.18"	.12"	.41"
Jan Average Low -	26.9	17.5	23.5
Jan Average High -	50.5	41.4	47.1
Feb Average Low -	31.1	19.6	24.6
Feb Average High -	52.7	43.7	49.4
Mar Average Low -	31.3	32.1	30.2
Mar Average High -	57.3	57.0	58.3
Apr Average Low -	36.1	37.4	36.9
Apr Average High -	62.5	62.4	66.3
May Average Low -	43.8	45.8	45.9
May Average High -	70.1	70.6	75.9

By the time you read this at the end of June or beginning of July, we will hopefully have started the summer rainy season. When I first moved here in 1999 the local wisdom accepted the date of July 4th as the beginning of the "monsoon". First of all, the summer rainy season we experience in New Mexico hardly qualifies as a "monsoon" if you compare it to what happens seasonally in places like India, although I admit it may seem like a monsoon compared to how dry the rest of

the year is. I checked my records to see how often it actually rains on July 4th, and found that of the fifteen July 4ths starting in 1999 and ending with 2013, it only rained on 5 of those dates - .80" in 2006, and the other four dates had .02" (2007), .04" (2008), .25" (2009), and .04" (2013).

So I arbitrarily decided a better indicator of when the rainy season starts would be to find the first day in June, or July if there was no qualifying date in June, we had a quarter inch of rain (which most Wildwood Highland residents would consider to be an actual rain, unlike those puny "teaser" rains of a few hundredths). Using that parameter, I determined that for 1999-2013 period the average date of the first .25" of rain that fell was June 28th. The earliest date for .25" of rainfall was June 8th (2006), and the latest date was August 2nd (2005). So go ahead and plan your outdoor 4th of July festivities, as there is only a 1 in 3 chance you'll get rained on, and if you do, the odds are it won't be very long. As for "local wisdom" you can draw your own conclusion.

CATRON COUNTY SEARCH AND RESCUE: *Chuck again -*

I've been asked to say a few words about SAR since I am the Training Officer for CCSAR and also an NMSP Incident Commander managing search missions. In 2013, in four of the five missions I worked, the missing subject(s) were found deceased. That should be a strong clue that if you go out into the mountains and deserts around here, don't count on a cell phone to communicate if you need help (there is little coverage once you leave the US 60 or NM 12 highway corridors), and especially don't count on the weather remaining benign. Better to notify a family member or neighbor of your travel intentions with instructions on what to do if you fail to return at your scheduled time, along with a description of your vehicle, clothing you'll be wearing, and any food/water/gear you will taking with you. In New Mexico, SAR missions are initiated by the New Mexico State Police, so call them if you want to report a missing party - NMSP District 11 Socorro Dispatch phone number is 575-835-0741.

Simple things you can do to prevent becoming a statistic: wear a whistle you can use to attract attention if you become lost or disabled (even around home at Wildwood Highlands), buy a GPS device (\$100) or download a GPS app for your smart phone (you do not need coverage for it to function) and learn how to use it, be prepared for changing weather conditions with appropriate clothing (that hike may start out at 70 degrees but temps can drop dramatically if you get delayed and have to return in the dark), carry a disposable lighter or other fire-starting device so you can make a signal fire and/or keep warm overnight, and do not start any jaunt into the forest without enough water to keep you hydrated until you return.

Anyone interested in joining Catron County SAR can learn more by coming to our monthly meetings March through November on the first Wednesday of the month at the Pie Town Community Center, 6:00 - 7:30 PM

GROWING YOUR OWN IN CATRON: *Residents Jonille Shepherd and Rob Sanders are 2 of our souls with green thumbs. Here's what they have for this newsletter -*

DIRT (Rob Sanders): Let's face it: with few exceptions the dirt in Wildwood Highlands is more suited for making adobe brick than growing a vegetable garden. My recommendation is don't waste your time with the soil on your property. Although it is volcanically derived, it is high in clay content, has poor drainage, and virtually no organic component. As an alternative, consider container gardening in large bins such as cattle lick tubs or raised beds made out of the abundant local rock. Fill the bins with a mixture of sand (easily found in the Plains of San Agustin) and older horse or cattle manure (easily obtained from the various local ranches). Western Organics in Albuquerque sells bulk organic soil builder compost, and of course any garden center will have bags of compost and other organic components that help the soil retain moisture and add nutrients. A good mix is 50% sand, 25% horse, 25% compost. Over time, more organic component can be worked into the soil.

Growing a Garden (Jonille Shepherd): Believe it or not, with the weather we have and following the directions above, you can grow almost anything in the Datil area. We planted a full garden this year – tomatoes, peppers, chilies, broccoli, cauliflower, celery, all kinds of beans, lettuce, squash – summer and winter, cantaloupe, watermelon, cukes, corn, radishes, cilantro, basil, oregano, dill, strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, grapes, cherries, apples, peaches, black currants, potatoes, and I even have a sweet potato that is doing wonderful. In the beginning you need protection from sudden frosts and the wind. Near the end of the season you might need protection from early frosts. But it is so worth it. There is nothing like biting into a huge vine ripened tomato or popping strawberries or raspberries into your mouth. Need any help, come on over and we will be glad to show you what we have learned in the 14 years we have been here gardening. Every year we learn something new, it is always a learning experience.

Below are some early and later shots of Jonille's garden. The editor believes she knows of which she speaks!

Starts with



and

Ends with...



LIVING OFF THE GRID IN THE HIGHLANDS: At least five families in the Highlands live without a connection to Socorro Electric Company. All of these have photovoltaic (“solar electric”) systems for their electrical needs. Some have wind machines to supplement the “PV”. One family has a utility connection but meets most of its electrical needs with PV and wind. The editor knows of two more families planning on installing such systems. Contact the editor (jfs) if you’d like more information.

BoD MEMBERS & CONTACT INFORMATION:

PRESIDENT:	Tom Cook	575-772-5350	tomcook(at)gilanet.com
VICE-PRESIDENT:	Fred Shepherd	575-772-5603	shepherd(at)gilanet.com
TREASURER:	Amber McIntosh	575-518-8639	amberrnmcintosh(at)gmail.com
SECRETARY:	John Schaefer	575-772-5776	jfs(at)gilanet.com
AT-LARGE:	John Kell	575-772-5929	johndawsonkell(at)gmail.com