



## **Conservancy Field Notes: January 2020**

*Updates from Resident Board of Trustees*

Willowsford Neighbors,

Greetings! Our names are Greg, Claudette and Chase and we're serving as the three resident members of the [Conservancy's Board of Trustees](#) this year.

Much like our HOA counterparts, Mike and Bill, we'd like to provide you with occasional updates -- residents to residents -- about the Conservancy and its mission, operations, successes and challenges.

Before diving into some specific details, it's sometimes a good practice to revisit the Conservancy's purpose. Some of you are brand new or relatively brand new to Willowsford as you recently moved into your homes, so unlike neighbors who've been here for many years, we need a common baseline so we're all on the same page.

The mission of the Conservancy is simple as it focuses on the **“viable, long-term use of the land, integrating farming, recreation, conservation and education to enhance the quality of life for the residents of Willowsford...”**

We see those four areas -- farming, recreation, conservation and education -- in our four villages as the Conservancy provides most of the natural setting of Willowsford (2,200 of the 4,000 total acres).

At our first Board meeting on Jan. 13, we discussed issues in those four areas. Here are some quick summaries of just a few topics:



## **HOA-CONSERVANCY RECIPROCAL USE AGREEMENT**

Of course, the Conservancy doesn't exist in its own farm silo! The HOA is a crucial partner in all that we do together for our community. A few years ago, a reciprocal use agreement was approved outlining how the Conservancy and HOA would practically co-exist together around facilities and space. The Conservancy and HOA are two separate entities, so this agreement is necessary for many reasons. It was time to update that document, especially before the Willowsford founder departs. Among the changes approved by the Conservancy board were:

1. New language in the agreement for the Conservancy to lease the Boat House in The Greens from the HOA for its office space beginning on Jan. 1, 2021. The Willowsford founder anticipates new home sales will be finished by the end of 2020, so moving Conservancy offices from a non-Willowsford location in Ashburn to the Boat House will benefit residents and staff.
2. The Conservancy and Willowsford Farm are not using HOA kitchens as frequently as in the past to make items like jams and sauces, so the updated agreement reflects some minor changes along those lines.

The HOA board approved the agreement at its meeting on Jan. 16. A [copy of the agreement is available online](#).



## **DEER MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

We live in a community that's close to nature in many ways. We also live in an area with a lot of development happening -- both in Willowsford and in surrounding areas. That puts pressure on the local deer population to find new places to roam -- and our 2,200 acres of protected open space are often ideal. The Willowsford Conservancy deer management program attempts to protect our forests and reduce deer browsing impacts. The 2019-2020 season is now finished and it resulted in 136 deer harvested, which is more than double last season's total of 61 deer. Still, the deer population is so high that we see this program continuing over the next several years in order to get the population closer to a sustainable level. Safety continues to be a top priority. Unfortunately, staff continued to hear reports of people ignoring the closure signs and walking on the trails while active firearms hunts were underway. There were no injuries, but our whole community must observe notifications and signs in the future!



## LIVESTOCK FARMING

Our awesome farm manager, Collin, provided his usual comprehensive update about farm operations. Notably for folks in The Grange, you'll soon see laying hens and a handful of pigs return to the farm as the team will be moving livestock operations from The Greens to The Grange. This will help improve efficiency in many ways, including reducing the twice-daily trips the farm team had to make to The Greens. Another benefit is livestock grazing on the main farm to enhance soil biology for vegetable production (while maintaining high food safety standards). Because of how we raise livestock, there should be no noticeable noise or scent issues.



## NEW TRAIL IN THE GROVE

Sign installation is underway for the new Pinewoods Loop trail in The Grove, which will add another two miles or so to our outstanding trail network. This new trail will open in the spring and connect to the new splash park; you can see its path by [visiting the Conservancy website](#). The trail app will be updated closer to the opening of Pinewoods Loop.



## FIREWOOD

Did you know you can buy firewood from the Conservancy? In 2019, firewood sales exceeded budgeted sales by \$2,000. More than 30 orders were received in 2019, but we're certain there are more of you who need some nice wood to keep warm now or roast marshmallows later this year! Using firewood harvested from dead and dying trees at Willowsford helps keep pests and diseases out of our forests that may be tracked in with firewood purchased off-site.

Conservancy staff is constantly splitting firewood and can deliver it to you. Again, [check out the Conservancy website for more details](#).



## UPCOMING MEETINGS

We'll stop there with updates, but we invite you to attend one of our upcoming community meetings. Please register in advance for [Feb. 19](#) or [Feb. 25](#). We'll all attend at least one meeting, so we hope to meet you in person.

Our next board meeting is March 24 at the Lodge, but we'll aim to provide another update or two like this before that meeting.

Our regards,

Greg Licamele  
Claudette Papathanasopoulos  
Chase Rowan