



Waterwood Neighborhood News

Controlled Burns In Waterwood

By: Earl McVay

The elected Board members of WIA are very much aware of the requirements, implications and controversies surrounding the controlled burning of forest lands in and around the community of Waterwood.

For the last few months, a WIA committee has been studying the requirements of various agencies responsible for ensuring the safety of the general public during controlled burns. Your Board of Directors was given an extensive report of the committee's findings at the February, 2013 Board meeting.

Public safety being a prime concern of any controlled burn, the Board members feel the community should be apprised of what has been learned. Consequently, this article will summarize general information we hope will help the community understand the purposes, rules and regulations and the enforcement thereof.

The National Forest Service conducts controlled burns in their forests for many of the same reasons as the Texas Forest Service. Their burns are done with primary concern for the safety of the public and conducted by experienced, qualified firefighters. The NFS burns according to an established plan and acceptable weather conditions. They acknowledge smoke is created, particularly in low lying areas, and this is a short term inconvenience with long term benefits for the forests.

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Spring Fling on April 13



Its **Spring Fling** time!! Our annual neighborhood spring get-to-gather is scheduled on Saturday, **April 13, 2013**. The BBQ lunch will be served from 11:00 AM till 1:00 PM. Come out and greet your neighbors and have a great meal.

A Texas Forest Service representative will at the meeting to discuss wildfire prevention. They will speak at approximately 12:30 pm.



WNN is sponsoring the annual **Dessert Making Contest**. Desserts will be judged and the top three contestants will receive trophies for their efforts. Please cook up something sweet and bring it to the fire station Saturday morning.

WNN "Happenings"



Waterwood Graffiti? Local Artist? No those green marks in our streets are markings by the WIA Maintenance Committee projecting potential road repairs later this year.



The **Waterwood** beautification project sponsored by the **WNN** is going great. We have 5 gallon, live oak, red oak and water oak trees selling for **\$2.50**. They are leafing out and growing every day. Remember a donation of \$.25 is being given to the WWL scholarship fund for every tree purchased. It's a "win-win" situation for our community.



Yes folks, it is happening. They are tearing down the cabanas and the club house. **WOW**, things are starting to happen in Waterwood land. Let's keep our fingers crossed that many more **good things** will happen in 2013.



Remember our **Volunteer Fire Department** needs more members. Please call the WIA office if you can help.

THE WNN IS PUBLISHED ON A MONTHLY BASIS. THE ARTICLES AND COMMENTS ARE WRITTEN TO INFORM AND ENTERTAIN THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE AND/OR OWN PROPERTY IN THE WATERWOOD COMMUNITY. IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT US. THANK YOUR FOR READING THE WNN.

John Shideler – Editor

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

6801 FM 980 N – North of WW Parkway, past Poole Creek on the Left

YOU are welcome to join us for:

Breakfast - Sunday Morning	9:30 AM
Sunday School	10:15 AM
Sunday Worship Service	11:00 AM
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 PM
Wednesday Prayer Meeting	7:00 PM

HOPE TO SEE *YOU* SOON



Wild Flowers on the Parkway

IN MEMORIAM

Joe Oates



A good friend and loyal Waterwoodian, Joe Oates, passed away on April 4, 2013. Joe was born October 25, 1938 on Long Island, New York. Joe is survived by his wife Kathy; son Joseph Eugene; daughter Amy Casagrande and two grandchildren,

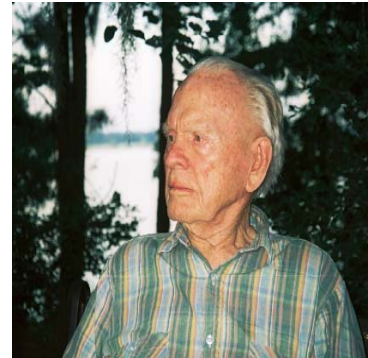
He and Kathy, moved to their Waterwood home in September of 1996. He became active in the Waterwood Volunteer Fire Department and was part of the Waterwood security team as well as an active member of the WIA Board.

Joe served eight years in the United States Navy as a Reactor Operator on nuclear submarines. He is a 45 year member of the American Legion, a 47 year member of the United States Submarine Veterans Inc.

A wake service will be held on Tuesday, April 9th from 5:30-7:00pm at Sam Houston Funeral Home in Huntsville. Service will be held on Wednesday, April 10th, at 11:00 in the St. Stephens Catholic Church south of Point Blank on the west side of FM 156.

Joe stated that he **“Liked to cook, enjoy politics, always willing to help a friend.”**

Kenneth Russell



Kenneth Russell, Professor of Education, Emeritus, Sam Houston State University Huntsville, Texas; and longtime Waterwood resident passed away on March 17, 2013. Kenneth was born on a farm near Chilhowee, Missouri on April 16, 1911. Kenneth and his late wife of 72 years, Marjorie, had three children

He and his family moved to Texas in 1950. They built their first home in Huntsville during 1951. Kenneth was the founder of The Educational Video Network, Inc. Kenneth produced many educational filmstrips such as “Understanding Money and Inflation” and “Parliamentary Procedure in Action”.

Kenneth was a member of Kappa Delta Pi, Phi Delta Kappa, American Association of University Professors, Who’s Who in American Education, President of Alpha Gamma Sigma, University of Missouri, 1933-34.

Over the years, the Russell family has purchased properties in and around Sam Houston State University. In 1998-2000, The Russell family purchased several properties in Waterwood.

Kenneth had an interest in conservation when he became a vocational agriculture teacher and taught students the importance of soil conservation. He also taught vocational agriculture teachers at SHSU where he continued his teaching of soil and wild life conservation.

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The Texas Forest Service has a high priority for year-round wildfire prevention based on local assessments and initiated prior to a developing fire season. The TFS has identified over 14,500 communities at risk. Waterwood is one of these communities.

The TFS uses local outreach programs to increase awareness and deliver safety messages by working with local and county officials. WIA is taking advantage of their program and will have a TFS representative speak at approximately 12:30 pm during WIA's annual spring outing and BBQ on April 13, 2013 at the Waterwood Fire Station.

The Texas Forest Service's stated benefits of controlled burnings include the reduction of hazardous fuels, preparation of sites for seeding and planting, improvement of wildlife habitat and temporarily controlling competing vegetation. The TFS acceptable burning plan includes: appropriate documentation prior to conducting a burn; plowing or preparing fire lanes around the area to be burned; notifying neighboring landowners, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and local fire agencies; and burning in late summer for optimal benefits.

The TFS requires burning under specific environmental conditions in accordance with a written plan. The burn is under the supervision of at least one certified burn manager on site at all times and with adequately trained burning crews of sufficient number for the size of the burn. Adequate protection for safety of persons and adjacent property must be provided, as well as minimum insurance requirements for certified burn managers.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality establishes regulations for all outdoor burning in Texas. Generally, all outdoor burning is prohibited, but there are exceptions. The one exception of most concern to Waterwood is that of prescribed burns.

This exception covers the use of fire to manage forests, rangeland, wildland and wildlife, and in 14 counties with coastal marsh land. The regulations are very specific.

The TCEQ does not issue burning permits, but does require approval from the appropriate regional office. In addition, certain other agencies as well as neighbors must be contacted before burning. Compliance with TCEQ regulations does not mean that other, stricter laws, regulations or ordinances cannot be enforced by cities, counties, or other jurisdictions.

For example, a local fire Marshall may object and prevent the burn. A landowner may burn his own property without having a certified burn manager on site. However, the land owner must abide by all the regulations and remain liable for damages, injuries or other consequences from the burn, even when in compliance with the regulations.

The general requirements by TCEQ for prescribed burnings are:

1. Notify the Texas Forest Service before carrying out any prescribed or controlled burns intended for forest management.
2. Commence burning only when the wind direction and other weather conditions are appropriate and will not have any adverse effect on public roads, landing strips, navigable waters, residences, businesses, farm buildings or other described places. Wind must be at least 6 mph and no more than 23 mph, and no temperature inversion.
3. Provide traffic flaggers if smoke blows across a road.

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(Burn continued on page 5)

4. Keep fires downwind of or at least 300' from any neighboring structure that contains sensitive receptors (e.g., a man-made structure utilized for human residence or business, the containment of livestock, or the housing of sensitive vegetation.) This can only be waived with prior written approval of whoever owns or rents the adjacent property and either resides or conducts business there.
5. Commence burning no earlier than one hour after sunrise and end it on the same day no later than one hour before sunset.
6. Extinguish isolated residual fires or smoldering objects if the smoke produced can be a nuisance or traffic hazard. It is understood that items such as stumps may burn for several days without the potential of creating any hazard, and these need not be quenched.
7. Once the fire is virtually complete and not advancing, containing only some patchy residual fires such as coals and stumps, the party responsibility for the active burn phase need not be in attendance.

WIA representatives met with a forestry service consultant and expert in controlled burns on January 15 this year to seek answers to numerous questions of concern to Waterwood. During the tour of all of Waterwood, our following questions were answered.

1. Is there really a need for controlled burns around Waterwood? Yes. Controlled burns help the forests, as well as mitigating the effects of wildfires. It is essential that a plan be in place which includes fire breaks. The most important fire break is a plowed area about 15' wide, leaving just bare dirt.

2. Are there Waterwood homes in danger from wildfires? Yes, particularly those with trees next to the houses and leaves on the roof and gutters. Also, leaves and debris in the yard near the houses are hazardous. There is inadequate clearance of brush and debris around numerous houses.
3. Where are these homes located? Scattered around Waterwood. However, it appears the majority of the houses in Waterwood have adequate clearing around them, except for major wildfires such as those in the Bastrop area last year.
4. How often should controlled burns be done? This is up to the land owner, whether it's the Texas Forest Service, National Forest Service or a private land owner, and the intentions for the burns. Some burns may be made with the intent of preventing wildfires, while other burns are made to aid in the growth of certain desirable plants or trees. Restoration of rare and threatened plant communities may be a personal goal of a private land owner.
5. What are the alternatives to controlled burns? Clearing certain trees and undergrowth and mulching the debris are helpful. A fire break of bare dirt in hazardous areas is essential.
6. Are overgrown lots a fire hazard in Waterwood? Yes, particularly near houses without adequate clearing of combustible debris.
7. Who is responsible for ensuring the party doing the burning is following all the rules and regulations? The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the Texas Forest Service. Local jurisdictions such as cities and counties may have their own rules and enforcement personnel.

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Waterwood Women's League

WIA is not required nor can it be an enforcement body for prescribed burning in Waterwood and surrounding areas. The TCEQ, the TFS and the county fire Marshall are the prime authorities for enforcement activities in our locale. WIA's only obligation is per an agreement with a specific land owner, George Russell, to post a notice of his intent to conduct a controlled burn when he notifies the WIA office. Such notices were given prior to the recent burns. Some notices were not timely updated; however, experience gained during the recent activities will help improve community notices in the future.

The agreement with Mr. Russell further mentions that all laws, rules and regulations regarding controlled burns including, but not limited to those of the Texas Natural Resource Code and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, be followed. As of March 25, 2013, there have been no violations cited by the responsible authorities for the burns conducted this year.

In the event any member of the community observes what they consider to be a violation of the rules and regulations for controlled burns, they should promptly report the perceived violation of local burns to one of the following:

S J County Sheriff dispatch – 936-653-4367

TCEQ hotline – 888-777-3186

The Texas Forest Service will respond to a complaint only if it involves a state or national forest.

The WIA board of directors looks forward to seeing the members of the community at the April 13, 2013 outing from 11:00 am until 1:00 pm. Come join us for some good food, visiting with your neighbors and, if you have any questions for our speaker, be prepared to ask them. We hope this article answers many of your questions about controlled burns of surrounding forests.

On March 13, the Waterwood Women's League (WWL) members were hosted on a special tour of The Huntsville Art Houses by Dan Phillips the founder of Phoenix Commotion.



In 1997, Mr. Phillips started his construction company. He began building low-income housing out of trash. To him, almost anything thrown away is a potential building material. He has built many homes in Huntsville.

He is a self-taught carpenter, electrician and plumber. He stated, "80 percent of the materials are salvaged from other construction projects, hauled out of trash heaps or just picked up from the side of the road."



After the tour, the ladies and Dan Phillips enjoyed a delicious meal at The Olive Garden.

The April WWL meeting has been cancelled due to the passing of Joe Oates, a good friend of Waterwood.

(See more photos on Pages 8)

Waterwood Women's League Photos

