

Office Phone
952-894-4368

Email
river_woods@comcast.net

Maintenance
rwgroundsmgr@gmail.com

THE Villager



December 2023

BOARD CORNER

October was Fire Prevention Month

Missed it? So did I.

This dedicated month reminds us to replace batteries in our smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms, along with other fire prevention tips, such as needing to have fire extinguishers and knowing how to use them. Alarm batteries should be changed every 6 months (for me, March and October).

Recently, I heard a chirp at 5am. Ugh. I knew it was not the alarm in the bedroom, since I had just changed the battery, but I had smoke alarm and a carbon monoxide detectors on a ledge just outside my bathroom. I could not tell which alarm was chirping, and I sat down on my couch to sort it out. I decided it was the carbon monoxide detector. You were supposed to slide a screwdriver into a slot to turn it off. I did that—nothing—I guess that would have worked if it were an actual alarm. I tried to open the case, and after stabbing the screwdriver through the case a few times, I got the case off to find a wired-in battery! So I took it outside so I could take it to the garage and smash it to pieces. **(NOT KIDDING)**

Wait! Outside, the detector made no sound. Then I was really confused. Oh no, maybe I really have a carbon monoxide problem?.....oh, wait again...that would be an alarm, not a chirp. So I went inside to collect my thoughts, and heard chirp, chirp. It was ANOTHER smoke alarm on a shelf behind my couch! It had a March 2023 battery in it--what I was hearing was the end-of-life final warning for that alarm!

The good news is both Smoke Detectors and Carbon Monoxide Detectors come in versions that use AA batteries. From now on—I will not use alarms with 9 Volt batteries, wired in batteries, or lithium batteries. My reasoning is that AA batteries are easy to get in and out, I always have them on hand, and most of all they are simple enough for me! It's not all solved for me though—I still need to buy a fire extinguisher.

Claudia Merriman
River Woods Board of Directors

Clearing of Decks and Roofs

If you would like to sign up for these services, please email/call the office for a sign-up slip. There is a fee for these services. The charge is based on man-hours required. Deck-clearing will be \$35 per man-hour. Roof cleaning is more expensive at \$60 per man-hour, but can help prevent ice dams, which can cause water damage inside the unit. This is not an on-demand service. If you're not on the season list, it could be two or more weeks until we can get to it. No contractor is permitted to do any work on the roof without permission in writing from the River Woods office.

December Dates to Remember

Sanitation service during Christmas week will be on Thursday, December 28 instead of Wednesday.

There is no Board meeting in December.

There is no ACC meeting in December.

Water reimbursement billing statements due by Dec. 31.

Season's Greetings

Salt requests

If you would like sidewalk salt delivered to your garage door, please email/call the HOA office and order it now. We need your help keep the walks safe for owners and guests. The crew cannot be here for every thaw/freeze cycle at every house every day, though we do try. Please help!! Let us know when your shaker is empty, and we will refill it. If you have not requested salt before and need a saltshaker, please also state that with your request. All salt products must be kept inside your garage. We do not offer pet friendly salt.

New email for Grounds Manager

We have a new email for residents who want to request maintenance work: rwgroundsmgr@gmail.com. This should be for notification about fallen tree branches, etc.. On other matters, such as fees, closings, and general questions, residents should still use the general River Woods email: river_woods@comcast.net.

Tree Maintenance Time Coming up at River Woods

Winter is a busy season for the maintenance crew at River Woods. There is snow plowing, sidewalk shoveling, spreading ice and sand on slippery spots ... and maintaining trees.

The trees at River Woods are probably the most attractive feature of our Association. To this day, even after 50 years, new visitors are still wowed by the 2,000+ gorgeous trees they see when they visit.

So why do we have to maintain a tree? Because trees are living creatures, and, like all creatures, have a lifespan and are susceptible to disease and damage. As a result, we have to remove and replace 50 – 100 trees a year. Some are removed because the city of Burnsville tags them for removal on periodic inspections, usually because of diseases such as oak wilt or insect damage. (The city gives you only a certain time frame to remove tagged trees; if you don't remove tagged trees, the city will remove them and charge you for it.) In addition, our Grounds Manager, who is a certified arborist, reviews all the trees on the property annually, marking those with disease or serious damage for removal.

And while trees contribute to the beauty of River Woods, they can also damage our homes. Branches can grow to touch the shingles on our roofs, sharply reducing the life of the shingles as the wind rubs branches constantly against the roofs. That means the crew trims

Parking Rules During Plowing

Be sure to keep the guest parking areas free of vehicles during a snowfall. Your guest may park in this area after cleanup is complete. Owners/residents are not to park in guest parking so their drives can be cleared. Do not block mailboxes, neighbors drive, garage doors or fire/drive lanes at any time or you are subject to immediate towing with no notice.

City Street Parking

River Woods Lane, which runs between River Hills Drive and Kennelly Road, is a city street. The city of Burnsville is responsible for maintaining and plowing this street. Therefore, it falls under the guidelines of Burnsville's City street parking rules (<https://www.burnsvillemn.gov/527/Overnight-Parking-Permit>). The Association is not responsible for anyone being towed from this city street. If you have a complaint about this street for any reason, contact the City of Burnsville.

branches back all winter. Why winter? Because while many trees can be safely pruned any time, it's dangerous to the health of oak trees to prune them in warm weather, as disease is likely to set in. In addition, when the crew isn't plowing and shoveling, they have more time to maintain trees in winter. In summer, when everything, including buckthorn, is growing, the crew has less time available for tree trimming and removal.

We try to plant trees appropriate to our climate and area, such as black cherries, disease-resistant hybrid elms, maples, and chestnuts. When we plant often depends on price. When nurseries are overstocked, they will often give bargain prices on small, young trees, and we'll buy large quantities and plant them. Sometimes, especially when we've removed a tree that's visible to many homes, we'll replace it with a taller, more-mature sapling, so it grows larger more quickly.

Tree maintenance is labor-intensive and makes up a hefty share of our winter maintenance budget each year. But it's worth it. If we hadn't had this ongoing tree trim/removal/planting program during the last 50 years, by now our Association could probably be renamed River Prairie.

