

WE ARE RUSTIC HILLS ACRES!

Our neighborhood consists of 205 lots, one or two acres in size, begun in the early 1960s by the late developer Bill Smartt. This is a rare piece of country located in the city, as our lot sizes allow us to have horses. The developer established legally-binding covenants (rules for what we can and cannot do with our property) at the time, and these still remain in effect. Homes were built on a custom basis, gradually, over time, so no two are alike. This is not a cookie-cutter subdivision!

CITY OR COUNTY?

We are part of the city of Colorado Springs. The properties were originally not in the city, but the city annexed us, dirt roads and all. City water and sewer services have been brought to the area, but some folks still have wells and septic systems. The city wants everybody on city water and sewer eventually.

ROAD MAINTENANCE

The dirt roads and adjacent ditches are difficult for the city to maintain, so the City wants to make drainage improvements and pave the roads. Initial paving efforts took place in the year 2020. The roads belong to the city, not us, so the city will do what they want to. The city now expects to pave all the rest or our roads in 2022. Regional stormwater drainage issues and lawsuits are the reason. A city tax for stormwater improvements was passed in 2017. Anyone with a specific road maintenance concern is asked to call the City Roads Maintenance Dispatcher at 385-5934.

FILINGS

On legal deeds, our 205 lots are part of three Rustic Hills Subdivision filings: Filing #1; Filing #2, or Filing #2, Number 2.

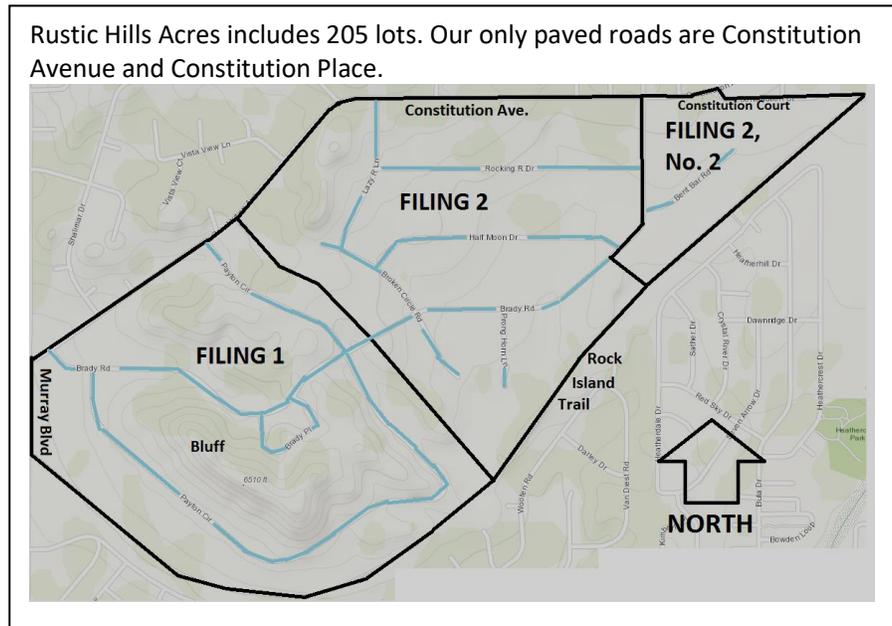
The larger lots of two or more acres, to the west, comprise Filing #1. The smaller lots of about one acre, to the east, are Filing #2. If someone was trying to cause confusion, they did a pretty good job!

RHIA HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

The developer was in charge of covenant enforcement while he was still building houses here, but created a neighborhood organization to take over this role. It is called the Rustic Hills Improvement Association (RHIA). RHIA owns no land and is not responsible for maintaining any facility. That is why our Association’s annual dues are so low.

Currently, our annual dues per household are \$50. Paid dues entitle a household to vote in RHIA elections. Dues are set by the members of the Association at its general meeting in May of each year. Dues are voluntary and RHIA imposes no liens or fines. Our fiscal year is May 1 to April 30.

Please mail your annual dues payment to: RHIA, P.O. Box 75074, Colorado Springs, CO 80970.



The purposes of the association, as stated in its 1985 Articles of Incorporation, are to: “foster and perpetuate the beauty and décor [of the neighborhood] through monitoring:

- a. The maintenance of roads
 - b. The enforcement and review of protective covenants
 - c. Adherence to the architectural supervision
 - d. Any other matters that pertain to or are brought to the attention on this association
- AND to generally act to improve the environment and ecology [of the neighborhood].”

SAVE TIME AND MONEY - SUBMIT YOUR BUILDING PLANS TO RHIA FOR APPROVAL

The Articles of Incorporation indicate that RHIA has the power to file suit in court to protect the covenants if necessary. Under the Covenants, ***property owners are required to submit plans to the RHIA Architecture Committee for review and approval before building any structure***, including homes, barns, fences and any other structures. This protects neighborhood property values. The approval process is quick and free of charge. Ignoring the process can prove time-consuming and costly.

COVENANTS

As noted above, the protective covenants written in the 1960s are still in effect. **We are zoned as a residential area, with no businesses allowed.** As noted earlier, the Board is tasked with not only enforcing the covenants but also reviewing them. The Board drafted updated covenants in 2017, and distributed them to the neighborhood for a vote. The updated draft covenants received a large number of votes in favor, but not enough votes to be approved, so they are *not* in effect.

Yes, our covenants are from the 1960s.



RHIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Contact information for the Board can be found on the RHIA website, discussed later herein. The election of Board members occurs at the annual RHIA General Meeting each May. The RHIA Bylaws state that the Board of Directors shall consist of:

- Four officers with one-year terms – president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer
- Six members with three-year terms, three from Filing 1 and three from Filing 2
- PLUS the Chairperson from each standing committee

Article X of the Bylaws states that RHIA shall have the following Committees:

- Architectural and Protective Covenants Committee
- Bridle Paths Committee
- Such other committees as deemed necessary to accomplish the goals and objectives of the Association. NOTE: We currently have a Hospitality Committee.
- An Auditing Committee

Article IX of the Bylaws states that there will also be a Nominating Committee.

RHIA ACTIVITIES

In recent years, RHIA has organized three annual neighborhood events:

- Neighborhood Clean Up Day (date may vary; often in June)
- Neighborhood summer picnic – sometime in summer, normally August
- Halloween Hay Ride – trick or treating activity on October 31

Every activity undertaken by RHIA depends on volunteers and donations. These activities are not mandated in the Bylaws, and can be discontinued if not supported.

TRASH COALITION

Once upon a time, 17 different trash companies drove their trucks on our dirt roads. Then an RHIA Board member got the idea to find a single vendor to give the entire neighborhood a reduced rate, thereby cutting traffic and improving safety as well. The Rustic Hills Acres Trash Coalition (RHATC) administers this program, and Waste Connections, Inc. is the service provider. Service is billed by RHATC on a quarterly, half-year or annual basis, as the customer prefers. The negotiated rates include a second receptacle for recycling. **Recycling is included at no extra charge, so you might as well recycle.** Participation in the program is not mandatory, but it is good for the neighborhood and saves you money. Horse owners in our “neigh”-borhood benefit because the trash service accepts manure.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

On a street-by-street basis, residents may work with the Colorado Springs Police Department to have a block watch program. RHIA encourages this but is not directly involved. Recent police data show that we have very little crime in our neighborhood, but the areas all around us have plenty of problems. ***One crime we have experienced in Rustic Hills Acres is mail theft.*** Getting to know your neighbors is generally a good way to make your home safer.



NEIGHBORHOOD NAME CHANGE

In 2014, the members of RHIA voted to change the name of the neighborhood from simply Rustic Hills to Rustic Hills Acres. However, this neighborhood name change does not affect property deeds and has not worked its way through any covenants, bylaws, or other RHIA official reporting documents.

Our neighborhood has a representative in a city-wide organization called the Council of Neighbors and Organizations (CONO), where homeowners’ association representatives meet to discuss issues of mutual interest. At CONO, we are now called Rustic Hills Acres.

RHIA WEBSITE

The RHIA website is rustichillsacres.com

BRIDLE PATHS IN FILING 2 – READ YOUR DEED – KEEP YOUR EASEMENT CLEAR

Part of the attraction and the value of our neighborhood is the existence of bridle paths so that equestrians can ride through the neighborhood safely. Filing 2 lots (east of Payton Circle) have deeds requiring the owner to provide and maintain a bridle path on an easement along the edge of their property. Failure by one owner to maintain an unobstructed bridle path defeats the plan. The property owner is responsible for this maintenance, not RHIA. Read your deed. You are legally bound to honor this deed requirement and can be sued for not doing so. Maintaining property values for the whole neighborhood helps to maintain your own property value. Neighbor up!

WILDLIFE

Our neighborhood sees a variety of wildlife. **Mule deer are common, so watch for them as you drive!** They enjoy eating our gardens and landscaping. Consider that as you plan a garden.



Rabbits, raccoons, skunks, squirrels, chipmunks, snakes, lizards, owls, and hawks are common in our area. We have flickers (woodpecker-like birds) that may pound on your house. There are also some bats and feral cats. There are occasional sightings of wild turkeys, and there have been rumored visits by a black bear, mountain lion, bobcats, and other such critters. Some wild animals, especially skunks, may carry a dangerous disease called rabies. For your safety and theirs, ***please do not feed the wildlife***.

We also have coyotes, so protect your small pets and children. RHIA has, on occasion, hired a trapper to come in and take care of coyote problems. We have a donation fund for this purpose. Please report any coyote sightings to the RHIA Board via e-mail to rusticboard2018@aol.com.

STREET NAMES

A property map from 80 years ago says that the Rustic Hills area was once part of the Galley Ranch (same name as nearby Galley Road). Just to the northeast of us, across Constitution, a dairy ranch was owned by the family of Ray Powers (Powers Boulevard is named after him). Prong Horn is named after the small, swift antelopes you sometimes see out near the Colorado Springs Airport – they used to wander around here, too. We're not sure what the names Brady and Payton signify, but most of our other streets are named after cattle brands -- Bent Bar, Half Moon, Broken Circle, Lazy R, and Rocking R.



A LITTLE RUSTIC HILLS HISTORY

The southern boundary of our neighborhood is the Rock Island Trail, formerly the Rock Island Railroad. The railroad was built in 1888, before the invention of the automobile, and it was a big deal. Katherine Lee Bates rode it to visit Colorado Springs as a professor at Colorado College, where she wrote the words to the song, "America the Beautiful" (The purple mountain majesty is Pikes Peak!). As late as the 1970s, we still had freight trains coming through, delivering furniture and lumber to businesses near Constitution and Academy. The railroad line was abandoned after flooding knocked out the old trestle across the East Fork of Sand Creek.

With the abandonment of the freight line, developers and city planners eyed the railroad as a possible corridor for a new freeway to serve future growth out east. Our neighborhood joined many others along the railroad line to point out the damage this would do to schools and neighborhoods, so the politicians agreed to table the idea. Meanwhile, the same neighborhood groups persuaded the city to build a **Rock Island Trail** instead. We can walk or bicycle to downtown from Rustic Hills using the Rock Island Trail and its connections.

There is a gap in the Rock Island Trail at Powers Boulevard, but there are portions completed farther to the east. The Clinton Administration wanted to commemorate the year 2000 by naming Millennium Trails in each state. Our neighborhood worked with the Trails and Open Space Coalition to successfully win Millennium Legacy Trail designation for existing and planned trails from Peyton all the way to Cripple Creek, together called the "**America the Beautiful Trail**" system, which includes our Rock Island Trail. WE made it happen! When using the trail, please consider picking up any litter you see and dispose of it properly.

