

# Apache Plume

A Newsletter for the Community of High Desert, Albuquerque, New Mexico

February 2023

## Submit Your SOI by April 6, 2023, to Be Considered For One of Four Positions on Board of Directors

*By the High Desert Nominating Committee: Ray Berg, Chair; Harry Jones-Mentor, Bomi Parakh, Mark Soo Hoo, Millie Yamada.*

High Desert is one of the nicest places to live in Albuquerque and, indeed, the most wonderful place many of us have ever lived. But perhaps it could be even better. If you have skills and experience that would make this wonderful community even better, if you see something that you would like to fix, if you think we could forge a more perfect union, and if you want to know your neighbors and neighborhood better, now is your chance! Submit your name for one of the open positions for a two-year term on our Board of Directors.

Experienced board directors – who are motivated by a desire to be involved, to help our community and to become more strongly bonded with its members– report a deep sense of satisfaction from their work on the board. For example, Board President George Marsh, has commented that his years on the board have been most rewarding in allowing him to meet and communicate with the various homeowners on issues that impact their everyday lives and to help amicably resolve problems that otherwise might have become sources of contention and conflict. He cites one example where he

and another board member met with a new homeowner to discuss the homeowner's concerns regarding the construction of his home. The meeting was beneficial for all and resulted in a better understanding of the issues that were causing the problem. In a second example, George and other Board members met with a group of homeowners to answer their questions regarding landscaping in their gated community arriving at a resolution that was satisfactory to all.

Not sure of what's required of a board member? There are plenty of past and present experienced board members who can guide/orient you.

Procedure: If this vision ignites your desire to know and improve your community, please submit your Statement of Interest (SOI) by April 6, 2023. If you have any questions, call Ray Berg at 505-366-8104 or email [rsberg01@comcast.net](mailto:rsberg01@comcast.net). Contact him when you submit your SOI so that he will know to expect it. The SOI template can be accessed and completed online on the High Desert website at [www.highdesertliving.net](http://www.highdesertliving.net) as follows:

- Click on "Volunteer SOI Form" at the bottom right of the page.
- Complete the relevant fields on the SOI and submit the form electronically by clicking "Send."

Once you submit an SOI, the Nominating Committee will reach out to schedule an informational meeting with you during the week of April 10, and a "Meet and Greet" with Voting Members on April 22, where you will have an opportunity to present your case for becoming a board member. The process will conclude with the election by the Voting Members April 27 at the Annual Meeting.

**Qualifications:** Before applying, please check that you are eligible under the High Desert Bylaws, which require that candidates for membership on the Board (Nominating Committee Charter):

- a. shall not have been removed as a Director by the Voting Members or the Board pursuant to Section 3.5 of the Bylaws within the prior two years.
- b. shall not be more than 60 days delinquent in the payment of any assessment or other charge due the Association.
- c. shall not have any hearings or appeals pending before the Board, New Construction Committee, Modifications Committee or Covenants Committee nor shall they have any legal action pending against the Association or any Officer thereof.
- d. must have lived in High Desert as a resident for at least six months prior to the date of the election.

The Nominating Committee looks forward to receiving your SOIs. If you don't feel you can meet the obligations for a Board Director position, please consider other volunteer opportunities on committees (such as the Nominating Committee), events, or as a Voting Member.

## High Desert Board Approves New Vet-Sec Security Contract

A new security company is patrolling High Desert. Vet-Sec Protection Agency was awarded the safety contract in January. The company began round-the-clock patrols February 1, 2023.



*Vet-Sec Protection uses this Jeep® Renegade to patrol High Desert streets.*

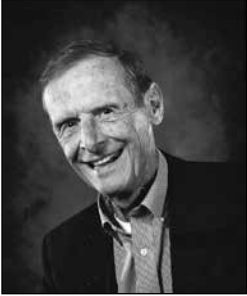
Vet-Sec replaces Allied Universal, which acquired G4S in 2021. Allied (and G4S) held the security contract with High Desert since 2013.

The security contract comes up for review every three years by the High Desert Contracts Committee, currently chaired by Lynn Claffy. The landscape and management contracts are reviewed on alternate years.

The High Desert Board of Directors approved the Contracts  
*(Continued on Page 9)*

# President's Summary

By George Marsh, HDROA President



**George Marsh**

I am a big proponent of self reflection as the way to see what we have done and can do better in the future. With 2022 in the rearview mirror, I wanted to take some time in this message to reflect on what we accomplished in the last year as a Board of Directors and put some perspective on what we are trying to do in 2023.

**Landscape:** We took the lead in providing a number of initiatives in finding ways to improve our cost-effectiveness in landscaping throughout the community. First, after a lengthy board review, it was decided to eliminate the landscape consultant position, which resulted in a \$60,000 annual savings.

Additionally, we took the step of appointing a board member, Bob Howell, as our lead on landscaping. In this role, Bob was to prioritize activities among the various committees and our contractor Yellowstone. Also, Bob was to look for reasonable cost reductions throughout the community in landscaping such as cutting down the trees twice a year rather than throughout the year. We continue to explore with our contractor ways of reducing costs in such areas as dog station replenishment, which has turned out to be exceeding our annual budget projections.

**New Community Manager:** One of the more significant developments for your board this year was the selection of new Community Manager Brandy Hetherington. Brandy comes to us with considerable experience in managing homeowner associations and oversight of associated financial operations. One of her major qualifications that impressed the board was her experience as an account manager for a major landscape company here in Albuquerque. The Board of Directors interviewed Brandy and unanimously recommended her for the position effective January 3, 2023.

Look for a more detailed article and interview with Brandy in this issue of Apache Plume on page 7, where she talks more about her experience. Welcome to High Desert, Brandy.

**New Security Contract:** As many of you may know, we have three major contracts that support our homeowners in High Desert: management, landscaping and security contracts. The Board of Directors decided that in 2022 we were going to reevaluate our three contracts and see if we were getting the best value for the service provided. In coordination with our Contracts Committee, we decided to solicit proposals for our security contract services. After a thorough review of the proposals, the committee recommended to the board Vet-Sec as our next security contractor with an effective date of February 1, 2023.

So, by the time you read this article, Vet-Sec will be on the job and performing its duties of providing roaming security patrols throughout High Desert. See page 1 for more information.

**Stucco Walls Program:** This was probably the most challenging program that the board faced in 2022 from a financial perspective. As you may know from previous articles, the board made a decision in June to put a halt to any further stucco wall projects until we could evaluate the entire program as to its effectiveness. We have completed that evaluation and we presented our findings at the Voting Member meeting on January 26, and will do that

again at our High Desert Town Hall on February 16.

While there is not enough room in this column to go into all the details of this program, I can say that going forward in 2023 and beyond, we will be doing a complete formal assessment of the walls in our community to understand their actual condition and determine the priority for repair. From that point, we will ask our Contracts Committee to solicit proposals from stucco contractors that can meet our criteria. If you were unable to be at the meetings listed above and would like to know more about our findings please contact me and we will discuss it in detail.

**Financials:** I must personally give credit to our treasurer Steve Hartig for his significant accomplishments in managing our operating budgets and reserves this past year. As of Dec, 31, 2022, the operating budget is slightly under budget and is projected to stay that way until the springtime when landscaping expenses tend to increase. A real plus in the whole process is that Steve places all the relevant financial information into an easy-to-read summary.

One lesson we did learn this past year is that we need to start our budget process for the next fiscal year (which starts July 1) much earlier and we are doing that as we speak. This will allow us to get the proper inputs and make the budget available to all much sooner and prior to the Annual Meeting in April.

**Estate Sales:** This is one area that we are still working on to see if we can make it work for all concerned, especially those in gated villages. We do realize that estate sales are an important facet of a person's life as they begin to transition to a different type of lifestyle. We certainly want to make sure we can allow that to happen in a safe and secure way for everyone. At the November board meeting, we did not approve the proposed estate sales policy. There were some concerns raised among board members about security, traffic control and hours of operation.

We are going to make some modifications to this proposal that will be acceptable to all concerned and bring it back to the board for reconsideration at February's meeting. We thank everyone for giving us their feedback as to how we can make this policy work for all.

**Current Year 2023:** As we move forward, the Board of Directors looks to find more creative ways to make our way of life enjoyable for all of us. Any fresh ideas are certainly welcome at any time. As an example, someone suggested that we move the time for the board meetings to later in the day when homeowners will be more available. We are going to do that starting in February with our meeting time changed from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. We are going to also move Town Hall meetings beginning in May to 6:30 p.m. Hopefully, that will be a more suitable time as well.

One of our major efforts this year will be doing proposals for the management company contract, which is up for renewal this year in May. I do know that the Contract Committee is already hard at work on this project.

Another area that we're going to be concentrating on will be establishing clear lines of responsibility and missions for the Landscape Committee and Natural Resources Committee as it pertains to our landscape contractor and our new community manager. It is clear to me that homeowners need to know who they should go to when they have a question regarding landscaping at their home or throughout the community. This is our objective with this exercise.

That's it for now. See you outside when the weather gets warmer.

## Manager's Message



By Brandy Hetherington  
Community Association Manager

It is wonderful to be joining the HOAMCO team for High Desert. I am excited to work with the community to accomplish its goals and help make High Desert the best it can be. Thank you to all the board members, committee members, Voting Members, and residents who have welcomed me.

I have a lot of learning to do and I'm eager to understand all the nuances of the community. While I wrap my arms around all the moving parts of High Desert, reading the documents, policies, and history of the community, I am also actively meeting with various committees to better understand how all the working parts coalesce together. I am thankful for all the active participants in High Desert. The community's success is really spoken to by all the wonderful residents who devote their time and energy to furthering the vision of High Desert.

A few reminders: The High Desert HOAMCO office hours have changed. We are open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. When you come to the office, please use the Ring doorbell and we will let you into the office. Appointments to speak with the manager are encouraged, but not necessary. If for any reason I may be unavailable to assist you when you stop by, please speak with Erin Brizuela or Marlena Unis. We want to make sure your concerns and issues are addressed in a timely manner.

Don't forget to sign up for E-Statements to save postage and paper and enjoy the convenience of not having to check your mail for an assessment invoice. Visit <https://hoamco.opt-e-mail.com/signup> to sign up. If you need any assistance, please call us at 505-314-5862. You will need to use an email address to sign up and it must be the same email address we have on file in Caliber. If you aren't sure what email address you've listed with us, call us or we can input a new email address for you. If we need to update your email address, please allow 24 hours for our systems to update until you can sign up for E-Statements.

Spring will soon be here and usually this is the time owners start making upgrades or changes to homes and yards. If you are making changes to the exterior of your home or yard, such as adding a structure, wall or other feature, please make sure that you submit a request to the Modification Committee. Visit the High Desert website at [www.highdesertliving.net](http://www.highdesertliving.net) to review information and to fill out an online (or printable) Modification Request form. If you have questions, call us. Please note that modifications may take up to 45 days to review and requests must be submitted before the first Friday of each month to be considered in that month.

This spring, we are also gearing for the Fiscal Year 2023 budget process and the Annual Meeting (via Zoom) on Thursday, April 27, at 6:30 p.m. See the website in April to request a Zoom link. Management and the Financial Oversight Committee are putting budget drafts together now. The Board will be reviewing those draft budgets before sending them to the Voting Members for approval. Budgets will be sent out to the community by May 1, 2023.

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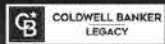

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## CURRENT INVENTORY

New Listings		Pending Sales		Closed Sales	
Detached	569	Detached	631	Detached	660
Attached	54	Attached	66	Attached	85
One Year Ago		One Year Ago		One Year Ago	
Detached	703	Detached	746	Detached	1,055
Attached	67	Attached	73	Attached	96
% Change (Detached)		% Change (Detached)		% Change (Detached)	
-19.1%		-15.4%		-37.4%	
YTD % Change (Detached)		YTD % Change (Detached)		YTD % Change (Detached)	
-14.6%		-22.4%		-21.0%	

Median Sales Price		Average Sales Price		% of List Price Received	
Detached	\$326,750	Detached	\$372,389	Detached	98.9%
Attached	\$245,000	Attached	\$252,057	Attached	100.1%
One Year Ago		One Year Ago		One Year Ago	
Detached	\$315,000	Detached	\$364,115	Detached	100.4%
Attached	\$209,500	Attached	\$214,381	Attached	102.2%
% Change (Detached)		% Change (Detached)		% Change (Detached)	
3.7%		2.3%		-1.5%	
YTD % Change (Detached)		YTD % Change (Detached)		YTD % Change (Detached)	
13.8%		12.5%		10.0%	

Inventory of Homes for Sale		Avg. Days on Market Until Sale		Absorption Rates (months)*	
Detached	1,105	Detached	30	Detached	1.3
Attached	68	Attached	19	Attached	0.7
One Year Ago		One Year Ago		One Year Ago	
Detached	732	Detached	18	Detached	0.7
Attached	56	Attached	13	Attached	0.5
% Change (Detached)		% Change (Detached)		% Change (Detached)	
51.0%		66.7%		85.7%	
YTD % Change (Detached)		YTD % Change (Detached)		YTD % Change (Detached)	
-		6.3%		-	

\*Absorption Rate is a measure of how many months of inventory exist on the market based on dividing the end of month inventory by the average pending sales from the last 12 months.  
SOURCE: Greater Albuquerque Association of REALTORS® - based on data from the Southwest Multiple Listing Service. Data is deemed reliable not guaranteed.

**LAND FOR SALE**



\$378,000

**5000 Cresta Del Sur Ct. NE**  
0.34 Acres

**LAND FOR SALE**



\$695,000

**6008 Beargrass Court NE**  
0.75 Acres

**PENDING**



**5616 Bosque Vista Drive NE**  
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**SOLD**



**13500 Desert Zinnia Court NE**  
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# Albuquerque Police Dept. Crime Statistics for High Desert

Year 2022 Type of Crime	QTR 1			QTR 2			QTR 3			QTR 4		
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Animal Call												
Rescue Call												
Missing Person		1		2	1	1						
Stolen Vehicle Found										2		
Neighbor Trouble			1				1			1		
Direct Traffic									1			
Traffic Stop				6								
Traffic Accident no injury	1				3	1		1				
Auto Accident with injury					1			1				
Drunk Driver												
Disturbance	2	2	9	1	3	6	10	5	2	4	2	2
Vandalism				1	1							
Suspicious Person/Vehicle	1	3	3	3	2	4	2	1	1	5	4	
Burglary Auto						2						
Vehicle Theft			1					1	2	1		
Theft/ Larceny							2					
Theft/Fraud/Embezzlement	2	1	2	1		1			1			
Burglary Residence	1	1						1	1			
Family Dispute	6	2			1	1	1	3	1	2		
Aggravated Assault/Battery	1			1		2	1		1			
Shots Fired		1		2			1	1			1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>

**Contact Numbers:**

- In the event of an emergency, call APD at 911.
- Follow up immediately with a call to High Desert Security at 505-485-5658

These statistics come from Albuquerque Police Department's reports for calls involving High Desert for the year 2022. Board Director Camille Singaraju, Sunset Ridge, obtains these statistics from APD each month.

Registration begins February 22nd



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## Brandy Hetherington Named New Manager for High Desert

Brandy Hetherington has been named the new Community Association Manager for High Desert by HOAMCO, the association's management company. Brandy replaces Lynnette Rodriguez who left the position in late December. She began her management duties on January 3, 2023.

The daughter of an Air Force serviceman, Brandy was born in Montana, lived on bases in England and California and moved here with her parents in 1995. She graduated from Del Norte and studied anthropology and psychology at the University of New Mexico. She is married with two daughters.

Brandy first worked in hiring for government contracts with Sandia National Labs, moving into property management in 2008 where she worked with a number of homeowner associations. In 2013 she segued into landscape contracting, working for several years with Heads Up Landscape Contractors. Heads Up held the landscape contract with High Desert for a number of years.

At Heads Up, Brandy worked with homeowner association clients and developers. She was asked to join Associated Asset Management, a property management firm. She once again entered the property management field, working primarily with new associations that were taking over from their developers, as High Desert did when the community moved into self-government.

"I enjoyed working with homeowners who were entering association government from the ground floor. Too often, homeowners who move into associations later do not understand the homeowners association government process."

However, despite the fact that High Desert has been self-governing for many years, Brandy said, "I've found that High Desert

residents have a very good understanding of the homeowner association process and I find that very refreshing. People seem to be very educated about their CC&Rs here."

Brandy said she is learning the ropes with the help of Erin Brizuela, Assistant Manager, Marlina Unis, Administrative Support and Justin Rodriguez, Compliance Officer. "I have an excellent staff," she said.

One of her primary goals is to respond to all management calls or requests within a day or first thing on Monday if the call came in on a weekend, she said. "I want to make sure homeowners know they are heard and I will give them a time frame for solving their issue," she said.

Her background with Heads Up, Brandy said, should assist her with High Desert's landscape needs. "I want to make sure everyone is communicating with everyone else, including the Board, Yellowstone, and various committees. I am a fan of over-communication," she said.

She added she is impressed by the various communication tools the association uses. "Homeowners here have the monthly bulletin, an extensive website and a quarterly newsletter," she said. "They may not read every word of every publication but they know the information is out there if they want it."



*Brandy Hetherington, new High Desert manager, at her HOAMCO office on Montgomery*

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## Board Awards New Security Contract to Vet-Sec Protection

*Continued From Page 1*

Committee's recommendation at its January meeting.

Last fall, the Contracts Committee solicited six vendors and received responsive proposals from three. All three companies were interviewed in person in October 2022. A final selection was made by the Committee in November 2022 to select Vet-Sec for the High Desert security services. The Board approved the decision.

"Vet-Sec was selected based on its ability to provide the services required, positive references and competitive pricing," said Cindy Suiter, Contracts Committee member. Other members of the Contracts Committee that reviewed and made the recommendation are homeowners Caroline Enos and Kate Mitchell.

### Contact Number Remains the Same

Homeowners can contact the Vet-Sec High Desert patrol officers directly on the property by calling the same number used to call the previous patrol at **505-485-5658**. If homeowners have an emergency, they should first call 911 and then follow up with an immediate call to the patrol officer at 505-485-5658. The company will patrol the community using its silver Jeep® Renegade.

### Company Started by Army Veterans

Vet-Sec was established in 1994 by three men who served together in the United States Army as military police officers. It began by providing guard services to apartment complexes in Phoenix and expanded its client base to hotels, hospitals, trucking companies, construction sites, office buildings and homeowner associations in Arizona, Nevada and New Mexico.

*"Vet-Sec was selected based on its ability to provide the services required, positive references and competitive pricing."*

*— Cindy Suiter, Contracts Committee*

The Albuquerque branch manager for Vet-Sec is Chris Silva. Chris is a 20-year veteran of the Albuquerque Police Department where he operated an eight-person squad in the K-9 unit as a Sergeant. After retirement in 2016 he joined Vet-Sec as Operations Manager, moving up to Branch Manager. Chris oversees 100 guards and administrative staff that operate out of its Carlisle office near Montgomery Blvd. Vet-Sec provides security for all Expo New Mexico events including the State Fair and Gathering of Nations. The company has branches in Santa Fe and provides security for the legislative sessions.

Chris said he is working closely with Brandy Hetherington, High Desert manager, to highlight areas of High Desert that may need extra attention due to recent property crime or the presence of vagrants.

"During my time with APD I was stationed in the far Northeast Heights and became acquainted with High Desert," he said. "I was always impressed by the association and the beautiful area. I'm definitely looking forward to working with homeowners here again."



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# Treasurer's Report: As Of December 31, 2022

By Steve Hartig, Treasurer



**Steve Hartig**

last fiscal year.

We are now midway through our fiscal year. The Master operating account expenses are slightly under budget year to date. We will likely continue under budget on a monthly basis till spring when landscaping starts picking up. We should be able to meet the budget on an annual basis. The reserve spending so far was mainly on our stucco walls as we finalize the work approved in the

### Most Gated Villages Under Budget

All of the gated villages with the exception of The Legends are under budget. The reason for The Legends being over budget was plantings. The gated village costs will also trend upwards as we come to spring but absent a surprise we should be able to meet all of the operating budgets with the possible exception of The Legends but that should be close.

### Certificate of Deposits

In December we continued building a ladder of certificate of deposits for excess reserve funds, purchasing one year certificates at 3.5 percent interest for Trillium, Wilderness Compound, The Legends and Desert Mountain. The goal is to build up a ladder of one-year certificates with a tranche of them expiring every quarter so we are able to adjust them as we spend money in the reserves.

### Audit Complete

The financial audit of the 2021-2022 fiscal year has been completed with no issues observed. It is being posted on the website as are all of our monthly financials.

### Next Fiscal Year's Budget

We will be starting the budget process for the next fiscal year this month. We have definitely seen inflation in a number of our costs so an increase in the Master Operating dues is likely, but this will be finalized in the coming months.

## Reserve Account

### Balances

	6/30/2022	9/30/2022	12/31/2022
MASTER	\$ 189,464	\$ 154,171	\$ 194,318
CANYONS	\$ 198,757	\$ 210,613	\$ 148,607
CHACO CMP	\$ 69,211	\$ 71,120	\$ 57,264
DESERT MOUNTAIN	\$ 245,337	\$ 257,925	\$ 272,177
ENCLAVE	\$ 54,850	\$ 49,257	\$ 53,294
TRILLIUM	\$ 192,838	\$ 199,189	\$ 115,711
WILDERNESS CANON	\$ 17,823	\$ 19,078	\$ 196,906
WILDERNESS COMPOUND	\$ 106,146	\$ 116,954	\$ 20,336
LEGENDS	\$ 124,833	\$ 126,649	\$ 117,952
TOTAL	\$ 1,199,259	\$ 1,204,956	\$ 1,176,565

• See more Treasurer's Reports on page 11 •



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**HDROA Income/Expense Report  
YTD as of 31 December 2022**

Accounts	Actual	Budget
<b>Income</b>		
<u>INCOME</u>		
4100 - HOMEOWNER ASSESSMENTS	\$632,970.00	\$632,970.00
4200 - COST SHARING - ALTEZZA	\$45,576.25	\$44,704.50
4310 - ASSESSMENT INTEREST	\$1,018.85	\$1,000.02
4330 - ASSESSMENT LATE FEES	\$833.00	\$1,500.00
4350 - LEGAL/COLLECTION FEES	\$1,930.42	\$4,999.98
4550 - GATE REMOTES	\$127.00	\$0.00
4600 - INTEREST INCOME	\$234.70	\$49.98
4800 - PENALTIES/FINES	\$350.00	\$0.00
<b>Total INCOME</b>	<b>\$683,040.22</b>	<b>\$685,224.48</b>
<u>TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS</u>		
8900 - TRANSFER TO RESERVES	(\$80,000.00)	(\$80,000.00)
<b>Total TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS</b>	<b>(\$80,000.00)</b>	<b>(\$80,000.00)</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$603,040.22</b>	<b>\$605,224.48</b>
<b>Expense</b>		
<u>ADMINISTRATIVE</u>		
5150 - ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT PR	\$41,849.17	\$41,447.52
5250 - BANK CHARGES	\$0.00	\$75.00
5400 - INSURANCE	\$11,391.94	\$8,596.50
5530 - LIEN/COLLECTION COSTS	\$1,095.62	\$499.98
5625 - OPERATIONAL SUPPORT	\$3,250.56	\$1,650.00
5650 - BOARD/VOTING MEMBER MEETINGS	\$3,811.04	\$3,163.98
5800 - OFFICE EXPENSE	\$12,392.26	\$10,750.02
8600 - RESERVE STUDY	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total ADMINISTRATIVE</b>	<b>\$73,790.59</b>	<b>\$66,183.00</b>
<u>LANDSCAPE</u>		
6300 - LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE	\$149,526.30	\$184,000.02
6305 - LANDSCAPE CONSULTANT	\$11,781.85	\$30,000.00
6310 - LANDSCAPE REPLACEMENT	\$306.15	\$0.00
6330 - LANDSCAPE OTHER	\$1,675.49	\$0.00
6360 - IRRIGATION REPAIR & MAINTENANCE	\$25,924.10	\$8,728.02
6370 - PET CLEANUP	\$17,493.60	\$4,999.98
6380 - TRAIL MAINTENANCE	\$2,544.91	\$2,500.02
6395 - LANDSCAPE PROJECTS - MASTER PLAN	\$9,277.25	\$4,999.98
<b>Total LANDSCAPE</b>	<b>\$218,529.65</b>	<b>\$235,228.02</b>
<u>MAINTENANCE</u>		
6100 - GATE & GUARDHOUSE MAINTENANCE	\$478.19	\$1,750.02
6575 - SIGN/ENTRY MAINTENANCE	\$0.00	\$3,499.98
6590 - WALL REPAIR & MAINTENANCE	\$0.00	\$250.02
6600 - SNOW REMOVAL	\$1,431.05	\$2,500.00
6850 - LOCKS & KEYS	\$0.00	\$124.98
<b>Total MAINTENANCE</b>	<b>\$1,909.24</b>	<b>\$8,125.00</b>
<u>PROFESSIONAL FEES</u>		
5100 - ACCOUNTING/TAX PREP FEES	\$2,696.88	\$7,500.00
5270 - CONSULTING	\$22,139.71	\$17,500.02
5500 - LEGAL FEES-COLLECTION/SMALL CLAIMS	\$2,587.56	\$7,500.00
5501 - LEGAL-GENERAL SERVICES	\$19,272.31	\$7,500.00
5600 - ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT	\$77,979.30	\$80,704.98
8200 - SECURITY SERVICES	\$112,606.40	\$118,125.00
<b>Total PROFESSIONAL FEES</b>	<b>\$237,282.16</b>	<b>\$238,830.00</b>
<u>TAXES/OTHER EXPENSES</u>		
5200 - ALLOWANCE FOR DOUBTFUL ACCOUNTS	\$112.42	\$2,500.02
5860 - COMMUNITY EVENTS	\$583.55	\$2,500.02
5870 - WELCOME COMMITTEE	\$0.00	\$600.00
5900 - WEBSITE	\$1,573.60	\$4,999.98
8250 - MISCELLANEOUS	\$426.67	\$1,000.02
8800 - TAXES - CORPORATE	(\$445.34)	\$5,000.00
<b>Total TAXES/OTHER EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$2,250.90</b>	<b>\$16,600.04</b>
<u>UTILITIES</u>		
7100 - ELECTRICITY	\$2,715.12	\$1,854.00
7500 - TELEPHONE	\$0.00	\$401.52
7900 - WATER/SEWER	\$38,009.31	\$37,080.00
<b>Total UTILITIES</b>	<b>\$40,724.43</b>	<b>\$39,335.52</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$574,486.97</b>	<b>\$604,301.58</b>
<b>Operating Net Income</b>	<b>\$28,553.25</b>	<b>\$922.90</b>

**HDROA Gated Villages Income/Expense  
YTD as of 31 December 2022**

Canyons	Actual	Budget
<b>Total INCOME</b>	<b>\$12,896.60</b>	<b>\$12,870.00</b>
<b>Total TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS</b>	<b>(\$13,500.00)</b>	<b>(\$3,500.00)</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$4,698.60</b>	<b>\$10,109.16</b>
<b>Canyons Operating Net Income</b>	<b>(\$5,302.00)</b>	<b>(\$739.16)</b>
<b>Chaco</b>		
<b>Total INCOME</b>	<b>\$6,090.27</b>	<b>\$6,072.00</b>
<b>Total TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS</b>	<b>(\$3,750.00)</b>	<b>(\$3,750.00)</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$1,711.14</b>	<b>\$2,187.72</b>
<b>Chaco Compound Operating Net Income</b>	<b>\$629.13</b>	<b>\$134.28</b>
<b>Desert Mountain</b>		
<b>Total INCOME</b>	<b>\$69,224.42</b>	<b>\$69,120.00</b>
<b>Total TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS</b>	<b>(\$27,500.00)</b>	<b>(\$27,500.00)</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$40,540.77</b>	<b>\$40,860.50</b>
<b>Desert Mountain Operating Net Income</b>	<b>\$1,183.65</b>	<b>\$759.50</b>
<b>Enclave</b>		
<b>Total INCOME</b>	<b>\$16,255.98</b>	<b>\$16,236.00</b>
<b>Total TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS</b>	<b>(\$8,000.00)</b>	<b>(\$8,000.00)</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$5,502.02</b>	<b>\$8,116.45</b>
<b>The Enclave Operating Net Income</b>	<b>\$2,753.96</b>	<b>\$119.55</b>
<b>Trillium</b>		
<b>Total INCOME</b>	<b>\$30,539.39</b>	<b>\$30,444.00</b>
<b>Total TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS</b>	<b>(\$12,500.00)</b>	<b>(\$12,500.00)</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$10,675.53</b>	<b>\$14,076.66</b>
<b>Trillium Operating Net Income</b>	<b>\$7,363.86</b>	<b>\$3,867.34</b>
<b>Wilderness Compound</b>		
<b>Total INCOME</b>	<b>\$7,035.42</b>	<b>\$7,020.00</b>
<b>Total TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS</b>	<b>(\$11,500.00)</b>	<b>(\$1,500.00)</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$2,360.80</b>	<b>\$3,976.32</b>
<b>Wilderness Compound Operating Net Income</b>	<b>(\$6,825.38)</b>	<b>\$1,543.68</b>
<b>Legends</b>		
<b>Total INCOME</b>	<b>\$17,046.53</b>	<b>\$16,992.00</b>
<b>Total TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS</b>	<b>(\$3,500.00)</b>	<b>(\$3,500.00)</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$15,372.47</b>	<b>\$12,286.84</b>
<b>The Legends Operating Net Income</b>	<b>(\$1,825.94)</b>	<b>\$1,205.16</b>
<b>Wilderness Canon</b>		
<b>Total INCOME</b>	<b>\$7,644.72</b>	<b>\$7,638.00</b>
<b>Total TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS</b>	<b>(\$2,500.00)</b>	<b>(\$2,500.00)</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$1,878.97</b>	<b>\$3,774.14</b>
<b>Wilderness Canon Operating Net Income</b>	<b>\$3,265.75</b>	<b>\$1,363.86</b>

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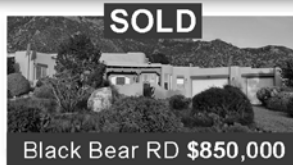


# High Desert Home Values up 5.7%

High Desert Home values were up 5.7% in 2022 as compared to 2021, in 2021 values were up 11% compared to 2020. As the market shifts marketing systems become ever more important. If you plan to sell in 2023, we recommend preparing your home now in anticipation for what is historically considered our peak season in Real Estate. The best homes always sell for more money and in less time. With strategic preparation and effective market presentation you can expect to maximize your equity.

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# Ride-Alongs Around Property With Voting Members Highlight Many Areas of Landscape Concerns



**Justin Rodriguez**

I'd like to start by expressing my gratitude to all the Voting Members, and everyone else, who participated in the Ride-Alongs at the end of last year as we toured the property together looking for issues to correct. I am thankful for the opportunity to hear from all of you and to be able to get to know you on a much more personal level.

## Landscaping Concerns

By and large, the most common issue I heard about was landscaping. These include areas of concern throughout the community, including villages with numerous "volunteer" plants growing in unauthorized, sometimes potentially hazardous locations, bushes so overgrown they make it difficult to see when pulling out of some villages, trees so overgrown they block the view of the mountain, and weeds literally everywhere.

There are, of course, other issues and concerns. One of the more immediate concerns about landscaping is, I think, fire safety. From intermittent spots with potential fire hazards to expansive swaths of land practically perfect for fueling fire, it is clear to me steps should be taken to reduce the likelihood of another fire devastating the community. Thankfully, the Fire Preparedness Committee is doing just that.

## Ensuring Compliance regarding Weeds, Dead Vegetation and Trimming Back Overgrown Bushes

During the Ride-Alongs, I became acutely aware of some common areas that are non-compliant with High Desert covenants. I have shared my concerns with the management team so that they can work with Yellowstone to bring attention to areas of concern. I better understand how it may have felt for a High Desert homeowner to receive a violation letter about one's own landscaping while seeing some common areas similarly in violation.

In an attempt to get residential landscaping issues under control, I will be working with owners regarding compliance for trimming of overgrown bushes, removal of weeds and dead vegetation, as well working in effort to reduce fire hazards before summertime. Shortly after this issue of the Apache Plume is distributed, I will be enforcing covenants related to lot maintenance, specifically the trimming of vegetation. I felt it only fair to provide owners with some advanced notice before I begin issuing violations for something I had previously been overlooking.

## Cover, Paint or Screen Your HVAC Units

Lastly, I'd like to let everyone know what else I am going to be looking for in the coming months. I am working to enforce a community-wide covenant that states all HVAC units must be covered, painted, screened or otherwise made to blend in or look like the rest of the home. I understand some of your units have had the same HVAC device since forever and you may have never been told it must be screened or painted, but it is a rule and I am trying to get all of High Desert to have a cohesive aesthetic by enforcing rules which support that goal, starting with this. When possible, I will try to contact you by phone rather than sending a letter. However, either way, it is just me trying to make contact with you and not me trying to hassle you or give you a hard time.

## Trash Bins

If you know you are going to have trouble being able to bring your trash bins off the street by the deadline of before Tuesday morning, either once for extenuating circumstances or chronically due to schedule conflicts, or anywhere in between, please do not hesitate to call and let me know. I will be happy to try to accommodate you and the situation. That goes for all sorts of things. Giving me a heads up is a great way to ensure I don't give you a hard time for no reason.

## Contact Me With Any Questions

Thank you for taking the time to read this. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns regarding this or any other matter. I am always happy to hear from you.

You can reach me at:

- Justin Rodriguez, HOAMCO Office: (505) 314-5862
- Compliance Officer
- [jrrodriguez@hoamco.com](mailto:jrrodriguez@hoamco.com)



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# Structural Hardening of Your Home Against Wild Fire

## —What Can You Do to Reduce Your Risk?

We've all seen the photos...a street of houses decimated by wild-fire with a lone house standing, seemingly immune to the destruction. What made that house remain untouched by the inferno while the others succumbed? Was it sheer luck, fire prevention tactics or a little of both?

Experts call it “structural hardening,” or the efforts homeowners can take long before any fire to make their building resistant to embers that often fly ahead of moving wildfire for up to a mile. Those embers can land on rooftops, window sills, decks, in gutters filled with twigs and dried leaves and on exposed vigas.

Embers and wildfire can also ignite low bushes, trees and wood-piles adjacent to the house and spread rapidly, igniting the structure. But if you've cleaned up your yard and trimmed the trees and bushes, what else can you do to ensure that you've taken all precautions?

Gabe Kohler offered High Desert homeowners some ideas on how to structurally harden their homes. He is one of the volunteer experts consulting with the Fire Preparedness Committee for the past two years. He is Program Manager with The Forest Stewards Guild in Santa Fe. The Guild is involved in “Wildfire Preparedness is Year-Round” campaign, an initiative launched by the New Mexico Forestry Division, the Forest Stewards Guild and numerous partners.. The goal is for communities to become fire-adapted through communication, awareness and preventative measures.



Gabe Kohler, Program Manager with The Forest Stewards Guild, Santa Fe

“A widespread High Desert wildfire would be called an ‘urban conflagration,’” he said. “Once the fire has started in a built-up area it could spread house to house depending on wind and embers. There is never a place you can completely eliminate risk. You need to look at what you can do and what you can stand to live with.”

There are ways homeowners can increase their chances of having their homes still intact after a wildfire. “We see communities where people do these things and their houses do survive,” Gabe said.

Albuquerque can sustain high winds and those winds during fire season can push embers out well in advance of the moving flames, creating what firefighters call “spot fires.”

“I hear homeowners say that fire can’t move through their neighborhood—they only have gravel and pavement,” said Gabe. “But do you have grass anywhere? Leaves in a gutter? A back deck or a decorative fence that butts up against your house? You have to consider all of these things if you want to harden your home.”

Gabe listed the following areas that homeowners should consider:

**Vents:** “Put screens on all your roof, dryer or crawl space vents,” Gabe said. “Make sure you have a screen across any chimney, too.” Attic vents should have 1/8-inch screens to prevent embers from going inside and igniting insulation and roof beams.

**Windows:** Glass can now be purchased that withstands higher temperatures. If you don’t want to replace all your windows, look at your screens instead. Gabe said. “Plastic screens will melt in high heat and allow embers to enter the house. Upgrade to metal screens. It’s a very good start for hardening your house.”

*“Once the fire has started in a built-up area it could spread house to house. There is never a place you can completely eliminate risk. You need to look at what you can do and what you can stand to live with.” — Gabe Kohler*

**Wooden Decks:** “Decks can definitely be hardened against fire,” he said. “Clear out all the dried leaves and combustibles that collect underneath the deck.”

**Roofs:** A metal roof is best, of course. A flat roof is next best if you keep it cleared of dried leaves. “A little corner of dried material can create the perfect campfire on your roof,” Gabe said. The tar on a flat roof is fire resistant but remember that many Southwest homes have wooden vigas that extend outside the house near the roof. Those can ignite. A pitched roof offers the most fire material, particularly inside the attic with the wooden beams and joists.

**Gutters:** “Keep them clear of dried leaves and twigs,” Gabe said. The dried debris in gutters poses one of the greatest fire hazards for any building. If a spot fire ignites the debris, the resulting fire will directly expose the edge of the roof to flames.

**Fences:** “Decorative wooden fences that abut your home can act like a wick, drawing fire directly to the walls,” he said. “Make space between those fences and your house. You can create a buffer of metal flashing or even a few cinder blocks.”

**Neighbors:** Some houses in High Desert are built closely to one another. “Talk to your neighbors about fire,” Gabe advised. “Don’t tell them what to do but do tell them what you are doing. Harden your home, clear space around it and have an evacuation plan. You can definitely increase your odds of having your home survive a wildfire.”

If you would like more information on how you can reduce wildfire risks, please email High Desert homeowner Judy Pierson, Chair of the Fire Preparedness Committee, at:

[judy@judypierson.com](mailto:judy@judypierson.com).

### Is Your Home Fire-Hardened?

- A home that has been fire-hardened means your home is prepared for wildfire and an ember storm. It does not mean fireproof. Home hardening addresses the most vulnerable components of your house with building materials and installation techniques that increase resistance to heat, flames, and embers that accompany most wildfires.
- Learning to live with wildfire includes taking steps to reduce the risk to homes. Homes built to modern building codes, with an adjacent and well-maintained defensible space, have a much better chance of surviving wildfire. Maintenance and upgrades to older homes can significantly improve the chance of your home surviving a fire.
- Part of learning to live with wildfire is understanding that we have some control in how we prepare for and address this hazard, and how we manage fire in our individual communities. (Reprinted from the California Fire Safe Council)

# Voting Members Amend Bylaws To Conform With State Law

By Harrison Jones, Voting Members Chair

Only Voting Members can approve bylaws changes, and they have diligently discharged this responsibility in recent weeks. The HDROA bylaws have finally been amended to conform with state law! Written consent forms from Voting Members representing 76 percent of all members were received by Jan. 19, nearly a month before the Feb. 17 deadline.

**Background:** In 2019, the New Mexico Homeowner Association Act (HOAA) was significantly revised. For High Desert, the most important changes in the law require opening Board Meetings and the Annual Meeting to all association members, not just Board Directors and Voting Members. Informational Voting Member quarterly meetings have always been open to all members, but state law at least implies that this also needs to be more explicit in the bylaws. The HOAA also details an extensive list of disclosure requirements.

Although state law automatically prevails, considerable confusion arises when there are serious differences between the law and the governing documents. After consulting with the association's attorney, the HDROA Board of Directors therefore proposed an amendment in 2019 to bring our bylaws into conformance with the HOAA. However, the amendment was not approved by Voting Members at that time.

After a long hiatus due mostly to the Covid pandemic, the Board prepared to submit the amendment for another Voting Member vote at the 2022 Annual Meeting. This time, no vote was taken since not enough Voting Members and qualified Alternates attended the meeting to represent 75 percent of all members. In addition, some members expressed reservations and had additional questions. Many of these revolved around how the HOAA meeting notification requirements

apply to each of the various kinds of meetings specific to High Desert.

**Process:** We formed the Documents Review Working Group after the 2022 Annual Meeting to address these problems and recommend solutions to the Board. With the cooperation of the Board, we sought and received additional legal advice. Many extensive and constructive discussions followed during which we reviewed the original 2019 amendment, additional concerns, and all the legal advice. Thanks to working group members Camille Singaraju and Susan Camp, we kept a careful record of our recommended changes along with how they relate to the new HOAA. We posted the final result, including markup with rationale, on the website at: [highdesertliving.net/documents-and-forms/official-documents->governing-documents](http://highdesertliving.net/documents-and-forms/official-documents->governing-documents) for review and comment. We also presented and discussed the amendment at the October Voting Member quarterly meeting and received useful and helpful comments.

We hoped that approval by written consent as allowed in section 6.6a of our bylaws would circumvent the difficulty of attracting a quorum to a single meeting. The Board approved this process, and the HOAMCO office staff worked with Susan and Camille to prepare materials before the holidays. The consent forms were mailed to all Voting Members and Alternates on January 4th, and the speed of response was a gratifying surprise. Thanks to all involved!

**Future Work:** The working group plans to consider other changes not required by law, such as leadership and scope of the Nominating Committee, updated policies for virtual (e.g., Zoom) meetings and electronic communication, member notification of outside requests for personal information, and even term limits.

We welcome input from the community. Please email comments to [hdmchair@gmail.com](mailto:hdmchair@gmail.com).



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## Approved & Prohibited Plant List Under Review By Board & Committees

Common Name	Scientific Name	Family Name	Height x Width (ft)	New Mexico Native	Firewise Trademark	Comments
ALL Male Junipers	<i>Juniperus</i>	Cupressaceae		Native	No	Prohibited by City of Albuquerque
One Seed Juniper	<i>Juniperus monosperma</i>	Cupressaceae	15 x 15	Native	No	ABQ City Recommends
Rocky Mountain Juniper	<i>Juniperus scopulorum</i>	Cupressaceae	40 x 20	Native	No	
Eastern Red Cedar	<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Cupressaceae	4 x 8	Non-Native	No	ABQ City Recommends

The High Desert Approved & Prohibited Plant List was recently revised (see excerpt above) by members of the former High Desert Landscape Committee to provide easier access of plants by homeowners, more data on fire safety and to meet requirements of the High Desert Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&Rs). The High Desert Board, the New Construction Committee and the Modifications Committee are currently reviewing the updated 33-page document before a final vote to replace the established list, last revised in July 2018.

Both lists are available on the High Desert website on the Governing Documents page. Scroll down to Guidelines for Sustainability to see each document.

### Firewise Designation for Plants

In 2021, the High Desert Landscape Committee began reviewing the list to determine which approved plants met the “Firewise” safety designation through The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The High Desert Fire Preparedness Committee requested the Firewise review and Camille Singaraju, a member of the Landscape Committee at the time and a Board Director currently, took on the task with the help of other committee members. At the same time, the group decided to include more classifications so that plants could be more easily located and identified on the list.

To obtain a favorable Firewise designation, plants are subjected to fire by the NFPA and results measured. Firewise plants all have one or more of the following characteristics. 1) Tissues contain more moisture, especially during the fire season. 2) Tissues contain low amounts of volatile oils and other readily flammable chemicals. 3) Plants provide less fuel, either by producing less litter or by staying small.

This newest High Desert plant list is listed alphabetically by family name and then scientific name. There are many common names for plants, so the common name used most frequently in High Desert was chosen.

The following points show how the new list is organized.

- The Table of Contents has eight classifications of plants. Each plant classification has a section that includes the headings of Plant Definition, Planting Instructions, Maintenance Instructions, and Fire Intensity & Propagation. These sections includes items in our Governing Documents about planting. This is to minimize the need for compliance research by homeowners. Please check your village’s CC&R supplement documents for specific guidelines.

- Generalized planting and maintenance instructions have been added to facilitate planning decisions for your garden.

- The fire risk of plants is discussed in the introduction “Fire Consideration” section. This is followed in each plant’s “Classi-

fication Fire Intensity & Propagation” section. Please note plants that become dehydrated have a higher fire risk. Native plants tolerate drought, which minimizes dehydration, making them less of a fire risk than non-native plants.

- Firewise plants lack, or have minimal flammable chemicals in their sap, roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits, and seeds that may turn into combustible gases. Therefore, they have lower flammability. (Please note that all dead plants will eventually burn.) The Firewise designation is for homeowners use in choosing plants. Each plant has a Firewise comment. “Yes” means it has low flammability, “No” means it has a high flammability, and “Unknown” means no reference was found.

- At the end of each plant category table is a section listing “Grandfathered and Prohibited” plants. These plants are not permitted in High Desert due to various reasons including allergens, diseases, invasive spreading, excessive height at maturity, etc. If a property has such a plant that has already been well-established, it is permitted. But note that no new plants marked “Grandfathered” can be planted going forward.

- A history of seed mixes used by High Desert is given to aid homeowners by listing locations to find these seeds. Please note native seeds depend on each year’s climate and soil conditions. Therefore, in some years, the seeds may not be available.

- The Reference list at the end of the document is extensive and includes the sources for the plant’s Firewise category, etc.

“We looked extensively through the older Approved & Prohibited Plant lists to see what plants are native and which are not,” said Camille. “Our list of trees includes some trees from the City of Albuquerque’s new 100,000 Trees initiative.” The goal of the campaign is to plant 100,000 trees across the city over the next 10 years to increase the urban tree canopy. “Some of the trees the city recommends will grow too tall in High Desert, but we considered if they might be planted in the arroyos to curb erosion,” said Camille.

What if homeowners plant prohibited plants or trees on their property in violation of the list? The Compliance Officer has the right to cite and fine homeowners who refuse to remedy requests asking that the property come into compliance with the CC&Rs. “Mainly we want this list to help homeowners select plants that will thrive here in High Desert, reduce fire risk and add to the aesthetics of the our community,” said Camille.

Both the New Construction Committee and the Modifications Committee frequently consult the Approved & Prohibited Plants List when new landscapes are installed by builders or when homeowners revise their landscapes. Both the NCC and the MC are looking through the new list before their final approval.

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## Homeowner Information:

### Making Changes to Your Exterior?

#### Contact the Modifications Committee First!

Planning on painting your house? Putting on a new roof? Cutting down a tree or redoing the landscape in your front yard?

Before making any changes to the exterior of your home, you must first check with the Modifications Committee. The Committee will make sure your plans conform to High Desert standards. The goal is to make sure all modifications preserve aesthetics and property values throughout the community. This is done by following the High Desert Guidelines for Sustainability developed for each of the villages. If you have questions about modifying your current home or landscaping, email those concerns to [highdesertmc@HOAMCO.com](mailto:highdesertmc@HOAMCO.com). See the website for more information about the Committee.

### Gated Villages Committee Chair Open

A volunteer is needed to assume the position of the Gated Villages Committee Chair. The candidate must live in a gated village, but not necessarily be a Voting Member. The Chair supervises the committee, which meets quarterly to address the specific needs and interests of High Desert gated villages. The group interacts with the Board and presents pertinent issues for Board actions.

Interested volunteers should contact HOAMCO and fill out a Statement of Interest (SOI), found online at [www.highdesertliving.net](http://www.highdesertliving.net). Click on "Documents & Forms" and then on "Online Forms" and scroll to the SOI.

### Adopt-a-Highway Tramway Cleanup

#### Tentatively Set for Earth Day, Sat., April 22

The next Tramway Adopt-a-Highway cleanup event is tentatively planned for Earth Day, Saturday, April 22, at 10 a.m., Project Chair Michele Lesher has announced. Please contact her at [mlesher222@comcast.net](mailto:mlesher222@comcast.net) to have your name added to the volunteer email list and to receive confirmation of the date as spring approaches. Volunteer homeowners meet on the designated day to pick up trash along Tramway. Snacks and bags are provided.

### Crime Awareness Liaison Position Open

High Desert is seeking a Crime Awareness Liaison between the Board of Directors and homeowners. The new liaison's role will be to communicate with residents on how they can reduce their chances of becoming victims of crime.

The position includes writing articles for the Apache Plume and working with residents interested in participating in the Neighborhood Watch program. It also involves working with the Albuquerque Police Department's Community Crime Specialist on focusing APD resources to specific areas of concern in High Desert.

Duties include participating in the Foothills Community Policing Forum's monthly Zoom meeting and obtaining APD Crime Mapping Statistics within High Desert for the monthly report, which is posted to the community website.

Interested persons should contact HOAMCO and fill out a Statement of Interest (SOI), found online at [www.highdesertliving.net](http://www.highdesertliving.net). Click on Documents & Forms/Online Forms/scroll to the SOI.



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## Homeowners Work Together to Light Up Sunset Ridge With 1800 Luminarias



*Village volunteers pause for a photo before they begin setting up 1800 luminarias along Sunset Ridge streets on Christmas Eve.*

Luminarias lit up Sunset Ridge streets once again December 24, thanks to the group efforts of homeowners under the direction of resident Marcia Castillo.

“We ordered 150 dozen bags with candles this year from the Albuquerque Youth Symphony,” said Marcia. “Sunset Ridge residents contributed to cover the cost in total plus a bit more to purchase extra votive candles, lighters and garbage bags to collect the used bags on Christmas morning. It’s such a wonderful community effort.”

The weather on December 24 cooperated and volunteers took time out of their Christmas Eve afternoon to line the streets of Sunset Ridge with the bags and to light all those candles at dark.

“The pictures just don’t do justice to how truly beautiful the luminarias were and how magical the whole village appeared,” said Marcia. “It was a tremendous event this year!”



## No Dates Set Yet for More Input On Open Space Education Center

The City is waiting on completion of a habitat study and an analysis of Simms Road before moving forward to set any future public input or site tour dates on the Elena Gallegos Education Center project, said Franchesca Perdue, Marketing and Communications Coordinator for the City of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation Department. She said citizens can refer to the city’s website for future updates at: [www.cabq.gov/parksandrecreation/open-space/lands/elena-gallegos-open-space](http://www.cabq.gov/parksandrecreation/open-space/lands/elena-gallegos-open-space).

Meanwhile, Save The Elena Gallegos, a nonprofit, grassroots organization not affiliated with HDROA, has filed a lawsuit against the city in an attempt to stop the project, said Katrina Sanchez, cofounder of the group with Viki Teahan. She said the organization has hired a lawyer and launched a GoFundMe site which has raised more than \$25,000 for legal costs. Signatures on their petition total more than 9,000. “We are seeking a legal declaration to uphold the land use restrictions in the deed to the Elena Gallegos and an injunction to stop any future construction on the land,” said Katrina. See [www.saveelenagallegos.org](http://www.saveelenagallegos.org) for details.

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# Plans are Underway to Revive the Welcome Committee

After a nearly three-year hiatus, the High Desert Welcome Committee has a new Chair. Sharon Littrell-Marsh met with homeowners Judy Pierson and Phyllis Ryder in January to discuss the direction the committee will take in welcoming new residents.

In years past, the Welcome Committee held two wine and cheese events each year to welcome new homeowners and explain the governing system of the community.

“We are looking for ways to have more events as well as possibly hosting a regular wine and cheese party,” said Sharon. “Our overarching goal is to have people in the community meet others who have like interests, who live in the same smaller areas of High Desert, and who could form some kind of a smaller neighborhood group if that is of interest to them. At the very least it could give people an opportunity to meet neighbors who are one block removed from their own home.”

Sharon said they also talked about providing new residents with a packet that shows nearby grocery stores, gas stations and other helpful services. “We also discussed having a town hall-type Zoom meeting on a monthly basis for newcomers so we can go over the salient points of the High Desert CC&Rs,” said Sharon. “That would give us and them a chance to place new faces to names. On that Zoom call we could have other High Desert Committee Chairs participate if they are looking for new members.”

It is important to revive the Welcome Committee, Sharon said, because the lack of one “seems to be a glaring omission in community connections.” She added, High Desert will be a stronger

community if homeowners know each other.

During the August Neighborhood Night Out event, she and her husband (Board President George Marsh) visited the participating High Desert villages. “We were impressed,” she said, “and it was nice to know that people had gotten to know one another in their own community. They keep an eye on each other’s homes when they are gone and have a neighbor to ask for a cup of sugar or for someone to stay with their child or animals when they need to be gone for whatever reason. We want to foster that kind of connection.”

The group will call for volunteers once more information is gathered. See the website or future issues of the Apache Plume for details. Sharon noted that committee members will not have to do all the work of holding welcome events but will recruit people from neighborhoods who are interested in helping with one event or another.



*Photo left: Wine and Cheese parties were regularly held in years past by the Welcome Committee. This photo was taken at a spring event at the home of Horton and Joan Newsom in Wilderness Village with then Welcome Committee Chair Thea Berg,*

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# December High Desert Studio Tour is Definite Success

The High Desert Studio Tour returned to High Desert Dec. 3, 2022, with an excellent turnout as visitors surveyed the creative efforts of High Desert artists. Thirteen artists displayed their work, with more than 60 guests signing guest books at homeowner Thea Berg's house alone. Thea conceived the Studio Tour more than 12 years ago but stepped down prior to the pandemic. The tour has been on hold since then.

Homeowner Dagmar Beinenz-Byrd, a fiber artist who knits, spins and dyes her yarn, decided to revive the tour and organized the December event. Artists included potters, fiber artists, oil and watercolorists, jewelry designers, sculptors and silversmiths.

"We were very pleased with the turnout," said Dagmar. "It was a wonderful chance for High Desert residents to see the real talent we have here in the community." Another Studio Tour is planned for next December and a call for artists will be made in May. See the May Apache Plume for details.

*High Desert resident Nancy Coleman, Solterra, left, and Dagmar Beinenz-Byrd, The Highlands, fiber artist and organizer of the event, stand by a display of Dagmar's hand-dyed yarns.*



*Photo left: Jackie Thompson examines a piece of handmade jewelry. Photo right: Sarah Lovell, stands by her pottery and stoneware display.*



*Desert Mountain homeowner Mary Martin hangs one of her acrylic paintings titled "Tatooine" which she displayed during the Studio Tour.*



*Regina Dubai admires one of exhibitor Paula Heffner's watercolor paintings.*

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*Homeowner Thea Berg displayed her jewelry at her home in the Overlook along with The Legends residents Paula Heffner, watercolorist, and Andrea Kilbury, creator of unique fabric home goods. Shown here are (left to right): Regina Dubai, Kathy Peterschmitt, Judy Pierson, The Highlands, and Thea Berg.*

*The High Desert Gardener*

# Ground Cover— What’s That?

By Margo Murdock  
High Desert Resident



**Margo Murdock**

In the layers of a landscape, ground cover is the carpet. It refers to any plant that covers the ground vigorously. In most suburban homes, turf grass would be considered a ground cover. But ground cover does more than just cover the ground. It acts as white space in a landscape – resting your eyes and focusing attention on the plants around it, but usually not on itself.

In nature, the ground cover layer occupies about 50 percent of the plant community. These are plants that have evolved to be extremely competitive; their purpose is to cover the ground in and around other species with which they must share water and resources.

### Functions of Ground Cover

Aesthetically, ground cover is an understory planting below the shrub layer, can fill in gaps in flower beds, add interest and unify your garden, create a mosaic of colors and textures, soften sharp edges like walkways or driveways, fill gaps between stepping stones or pavers, replace turf while providing scent when stepped on, and can be used with rock gardens. Ground cover is particularly useful in smaller flower beds and rock gardens, anchoring the soil and providing low-care color.

Functionally, ground cover is a problem-solver that reduces erosion on a slope, lessens the need for weeding by filling in gaps and covering bare earth, moderates soil temperature like all mulches,



*I planted Amethyst Falls (center) in an area I reworked several years ago. It looked quite sparse at first but has filled in nicely. In the back is sand sage and a Karl Foerster grass.*

reduces mowing and fertilization when replacing turf, and provides protection and food for wildlife.

It can consist of plants as a “living mulch” or can be wood (not advisable in high fire-prone areas) or gravel on top of the soil. Note that living mulch does not need to be periodically renewed and also stays cooler than gravel. But aggressiveness with ground covers is both a plus and a minus. Some ground covers like ivy can take over a bed and start climbing trees—not something you want. Like all plants, ground cover needs to be put in locations where it will

*(Continued on page 25)*

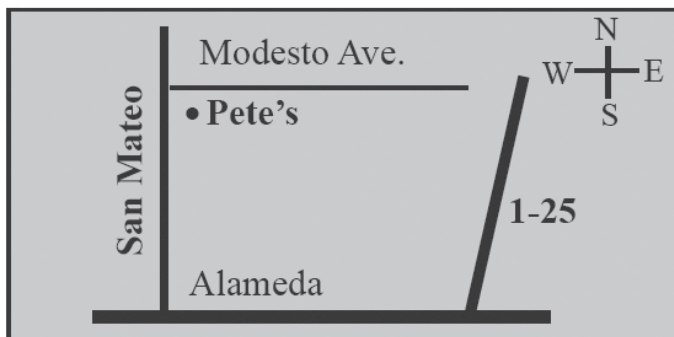
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## Ground Cover— *From Page 24*

thrive but not take over. Deep edging can help some with control.

### Reproduction or Growth Habit

Ground cover plants reproduce in many different ways with some filling in more slowly than others. A ground cover plant may grow laterally as bunching grasses (blue grama) do, to the side such that when a branch touches the soil a new plant will root, by using basal growth (like a hens and chicks plant), with rhizomes branching below the surface (Bermuda grass), as stolons above ground (buffalo grass), or the roots can spread or form an underground mat (creeping phlox).

### Issues to Consider

You should consider plant characteristics of the ground cover and where you intend to plant it:

- Ground covers designated as low-growing can get up to two feet high and can spread.
- Where will you plant it? In sun or in the shade, with west or south-facing heat or under a tree with shade?
- Consider deciduous vs. evergreen ground covers – is this a location that would be ugly in the winter with bare sticks, but optionally might have great fall color?
- Prostrate – do you want the ground cover to creep over walls, bed edges, or walkway edges? Will you be able to contain it?
- Do you want fill-in ground cover around pavers? Some ground covers like pink chintz thyme look great around rocks or pavers.
- Consider the importance of protecting your area against fire. Fire resistant ground covers such as sedum work well to hold in moisture and provide interesting texture to small gardens. Just watering your ground cover can help retard fire.

### Soil Preparation

What kind of soil preparation might you need to do? The easiest way to determine what soil type works best for your ground cover choice is to see where the plant grows natively and try to reproduce those conditions. Or, if your location isn't ideal, try to either improve it (adding compost if the plant needs a more organic or richer soil) or choosing another plant that's not so picky.

Consider tree or shrub roots – will these be an issue when you go to plant? If the answer is yes, don't cut any roots over an inch in diameter in order to keep from damaging the tree or shrub. The roots may be more like a network of roots and you won't be able to dig into it, so this might be a place to use organic mulch similar to the forest floor.

What about spacing requirements? Before you plant find out what spacing you need that matches the speed of fill versus your budget. It's easy to plant ground cover plants too close so that it looks filled in right away. But those closely spaced plants can overgrow the area quickly and then you need to remove some or transplant some to another location!

Irrigation must be planned. Don't mix xeric with oasis plants on the same irrigation zone. Neither will do well. Although you can set an emitter at the feeder root ends which may be where the edge of the pot was, you can alternately set your irrigation in a grid pattern with the plant in the middle of each square. This may help the plants fill in the holes more easily and stretches your budget, too.



*Above is my germander in the back yard. It is a dense small-leaved shrub with spikes of pink flowers in summer.*

### Planting

Ground cover can be planted like any plant (see my article on the High Desert website called "Planting - Pretty Basic?" on the General Gardening page) but there are a few other things to think about. You can always go in later and maybe add a plant or two by breaking up a potted plant into smaller ones and using those for fill. You want to put down a typical organic mulch (about an inch), lightly

but not deep. You want to reduce the chance for weed seeds to germinate, but you don't want to eliminate reseeding from your new ground cover plant. Hand weeding may be required initially.

### Types and Examples of Ground Cover

Your choices to plant can include some of the following. I've included names of ones I like and have had good luck growing:

- Perennials: Basket-of-gold (yellow alyssum), germander (both creeping and mat, evergreen), plumbago (provides great fall color and blue blooms), ice plant or sedums (fire resistant and evergreen, some blooms), horehound (a variegated evergreen), phlox (this drapes over low walls and rocks), Persian stone-cress (good in rock gardens and it blooms pink, evergray), prairie sage (green-gray stems), creeping thyme (nice smell, some thyme will bloom), and veronica (blue blooms).
- Shrubs: Creeping mahonia (has flowers, berries, and provides fall color), Gro-low sumac (provides autumn red color), prostrate sumac (autumn yellow orange color), Pawnee Buttes sand cherry (spring white blooms and dark berries), Kinnikinnick (evergreen, red berries).
- Native prairie grasses with color and seed heads: the different grama grasses, muhly grasses, and little bluestems.
- Ornamental grasses with color and seed heads: Blue avena, fescues.

### Resources:

- *High Desert Approved Plant List (ground covers). See website.*
- *ABCWUA Lists in the Index area of the Guide to Xeriscaping*
- *ABQWUA 505 Outside article on the web*
- *Plants of the Southwest spacing chart*

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# High Desert Committee & Project Contact Information

If you have a question about High Desert, who should you ask? The answer to many questions is easily found on the High Desert website at [www.highdesertliving.net](http://www.highdesertliving.net). A calendar of events, all our governing documents, easy access to the request form for modifications, and a great deal more is found on the site. When it comes to High Desert, the website is the place to start. For other questions:

- Owners should contact HOAMCO at (505) 314-5862 for any inquiry about High Desert development, questions about the CC&Rs, or concerns with the operation of the association. See the following page for names and contact information

- See the names and telephone numbers on the opposite page for board members, patrols, website and newsletter information.

- High Desert residents can contact their elected Voting Members for specific answers to questions concerning their villages. Village Voting Member contact information can be found online at: [www.highdesertliving.net](http://www.highdesertliving.net). At the top, click on "Villages" and choose the village from the dropdown menu. Residents can also call the office at 505-314-5862 to learn their village representative. High Desert Committee chairperson contacts are below.

- **Crime Awareness Liaison:**

Position Open: Contact HOAMCO if interested.  
[hdcimeprevtn@googlegroups.com](mailto:hdcimeprevtn@googlegroups.com)

- **Welcome Committee:**

Sharon Littrell-Marsh  
[sharonlittrell@hotmail.com](mailto:sharonlittrell@hotmail.com)

- **Voting Members Chairperson:**

Harrison Jones:(505) 440-8198 (cell): [hvdvdmchair@gmail.com](mailto:hvdmchair@gmail.com)

- **Gated Village Committee:**

Position Open: Contact HOAMCO if interested.

- **Tramway Cleanup Project:**

Michelle Leshler: (505) 844-2854: [mlesher222@comcast.net](mailto:mlesher222@comcast.net)

- **Fire Preparedness Committee**

Judy Pierson: (505) 220-9193: [Judy@judypierson.com](mailto:Judy@judypierson.com)

- **Communications Committee:**

Reg Rider and Susan Camp:

[CommunicationsCommittee@HOAMCO.com](mailto:CommunicationsCommittee@HOAMCO.com)

## High Desert Security Provides Vacation Watches for HD Homes

Are you leaving on vacation or business and would like High Desert Security to keep an eye on your home? You can call the patrol service directly or fill out a form and submit it electronically.

Go to the High Desert website at [www.highdesertliving.net](http://www.highdesertliving.net). On the homepage, go to the bottom under Important Forms and click on Vacation Watch Form. Residents can fill the form out online and submit it directly. Or, call High Desert Security directly at (505) 485-5658.

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(Located on the north side of Montgomery, west of  
 Juan Tabo between Savoy and El Patron restaurants.)

After-hours emergency maintenance phone contact:

Call (505) 221-0189 (an on-call staff member will  
 answer or return your call shortly.)

### • Northeast Heights Office Hours:

Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

### Management Staff:

#### • Community Manager: **Brandy Hetherington,**

[bhetherington@HOAMCO.com](mailto:bhetherington@HOAMCO.com)

[highdesertmanager@HOAMCO.com](mailto:highdesertmanager@HOAMCO.com)

#### • Assistant Manager: **Erin Brizuela**

[ebrizuela@HOAMCO.com](mailto:ebrizuela@HOAMCO.com)

#### • Violations Coordinator: **Justin Rodriguez,**

[JRRodriguez@hoamco.com](mailto:JRRodriguez@hoamco.com)

#### • Administrative Support: **Marlena Unis**

[munis@hoamco.com](mailto:munis@hoamco.com)

#### • High Desert Security:

Security Patrol: **(505) 485-5658**

#### • High Desert Apache Plume Newsletter:

Rebecca Murphy: Editor, (505) 377-7227;

[EEnews@outlook.com](mailto:EEnews@outlook.com)

Newsletter Liaison: Susan Camp

[CommunicationsCommittee@HOAMCO.com](mailto:CommunicationsCommittee@HOAMCO.com)

#### • High Desert Website:

Website Liaison: Bill Freer & Mary Martin:

[hdwebcom21@gmail.com](mailto:hdwebcom21@gmail.com)

The next issue of the Apache Plume will be mailed to all  
 High Desert homeowners in mid-May 2023.

Contact Rebecca Murphy (505-377-7227) to place an ad.

• Ad deadline for the May issue: April 24, 2023

• Copy deadline for the May issue: May 1, 2023

## Board & Committee Meetings

### • Modifications Committee Meetings:

All requests processed by email. Write HOAMCO at  
[highdesertmanager@HOAMCO.com](mailto:highdesertmanager@HOAMCO.com). For information on  
 submissions, see website at [www.highdesertliving.net](http://www.highdesertliving.net).  
 Submission deadlines: March 3, April 7, May 5.

### • Board of Directors Meetings:

Feb. 21, March 21, May 16, 2023, at 5 p.m.

Zoom meeting

(Note: Board meetings are now held monthly at 5 p.m.)

### • Voting Members Annual Meeting:

Thursday, April 27, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.

Zoom meeting

### • Town Hall Meeting:

Thursday, Feb. 16, at 4 p.m.; Thursday, May 18, 2023,  
 at 6:30 p.m. (New time begins in May)

Zoom meeting. Obtain link on website.

Note: For a complete list of all upcoming events and meetings,  
 see the website calendar at: [www.highdesertliving.net](http://www.highdesertliving.net).

*The High Desert Apache Plume newsletter  
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 High Desert website: [www.highdesertliving.net](http://www.highdesertliving.net); Management Company: HOAMCO: (505) 888-4479  
 Community Association Manager, Brandy Hetherington: [highdesertmanager@HOAMCO.com](mailto:highdesertmanager@HOAMCO.com): (505) 314-5862  
 The Apache Plume is edited by Editorial Enterprises, Rebecca Murphy: [EEnews@outlook.com](mailto:EEnews@outlook.com): (505) 377-7227  
 Communications Committee, Co-Chairs Reg Rider, Susan Camp: [CommunicationsCommittee@HOAMCO.com](mailto:CommunicationsCommittee@HOAMCO.com)



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**SOLD!**



12908 Sandia Point Rd NE

**SHARON'S HIGH DESERT SOLD HOMES UPDATE! SELLING YOUR HOME IN 2023?**

High Desert Home Sales Will Continue at a good pace in 2023. The Albuquerque and High Desert real estate market activity continues to be solid with increases in home values expected at 1 to 2% this year. Low inventory and strong demand are driving sales, and buyers are still willing to afford the current interest rates. Buyers are looking for High Desert Homes which tend to be higher quality with quality decor, updates and upgrades. High end homes are selling and there is low inventory! Large and small homes are selling, open and traditional floorplans are selling, home office or extra bedrooms are still in strong demand. Now is still a good time to sell your home while the market sales are strong and with a low home inventory supply. Sharon McCollum offers you a full service, comprehensive and aggressive Marketing Plan to get your home SOLD fast with the best terms for you! Sharon's marketing plan includes intense investing in internet & social media marketing and up to date prospecting and marketing technology systems promoting your home to all buyers for High Desert Homes.

**UPDATE HIGH DESERT MARKET ACTIVITY - PAST YEAR 2/2022 TO 2/2023**

**HIGH DESERT HOME SALES ACTIVITY**

2 Homes FOR SALE average asking price \$525,000 at \$255.68 per sf  
3 Homes PENDING average asking price \$428,267 at \$250.66 per sf  
52 SOLD this past year (12 mo) average sold price \$590,361 at \$275.62 per sf

**HIGH DESERT ESTATE PROPERTIES SALES ACTIVITY**

4 Homes FOR SALE average asking price \$1,447,500 at \$332 per sf  
4 PENDING average asking price \$1,261,250 at \$305.95 per sf

22 SOLD this past year (12 mo) average sold price \$1,290,364 at \$306.93 per sf  
NOTE: EVERY HOME IS UNIQUE - PRICE IS ALWAYS BASED ON CONDITION, MARKET APPEAL, UPDATES, LOCATION, AND VIEWS

INTEREST RATES: Conventional 30-year rates are hovering around 5.875% & 5.627% 30-year VA

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