

9 May 2023  
9:45 am

Wildwood Board of Supervisors Presentation - as of 27 April 2023

Ron Wood

Good day. I am Ron Wood, President of the Wildwood Board. Thank you for the opportunity to present to the Board of Supervisors. Thank you Chris for your work on this project.

I came to Wildwood for the first time in 2015. Wildwood was a sanctuary for me at a time when I needed it. I fell in love with the land of Wildwood and began my stewardship. It was because of my work on managing the land, that I was invited to join the board.

I'd like to begin my brief comments with our Mission Statement.

Wildwood is a sanctuary created and sustained by gay men for healing, transformation and spiritual growth. The Wildwood community will be a safe and sustainable oasis for all of the diverse members of the LGBT(Q) Community and any individual or group in agreement with our values. We welcome individuals of all ages, sexual and ethnic identities and levels of mobility; facilitate the expression of love, intimacy and the integration of mind, body and spirit; provide an environment for connecting with nature, with spirit and with each other: demonstrate by example the promotion of positive change in the world.

We would like our Use Permit to be approved so we can go on with the work we have been doing for over 20 years. Wildwood has been hosting personal growth events for the greater queer community and their allies for twenty years. HAI of Sonoma, CSS of Guerneville support our reopening and want to bring their Sonoma based businesses back to retreats in Sonoma County. We are a retreat center, not a resort.

For the past 20 years, under our conservation agreement with the Golden State Land Conservancy the income from the non-profit retreat Center funded our stewardship of the land. That income ceased in September 2019 when we were closed for not having a use permit. This was a huge surprise to me and the rest of the Board.

We have been running the Wildwood Retreat Center in compliance with Sonoma County requirements. For example, all of our buildings have been on the Property Tax rolls since 1977. For 20 years, we have consistently passed our Health Department inspections of our Kitchen, Pool & Hot Tub. We have paid our Hotel Occupancy Tax regularly as required.

Wildwood has received strong letters from our conservation partners. Opening the Retreat Center will enable Wildwood to fulfill our mission and put us back on the path to financial stability.

I would like to introduce my fellow board member, Leif Glomset

Hello Chairman Coursey, Lynda Hopkins and Board Members. My name is Leif Glomset. I serve on the board of the Wildwood Conservation Foundation. I am a retired architect, and took on the unpaid role of managing Wildwood's facilities 4 ½ years ago. When we learned of zoning and building violations, I authored the application to bring the foundation into compliance.

I would like to thank our planners, Chris Wendt and Ross Markey for assisting us in understanding the regulations through these years.

I would like to address some core concerns we have heard from the public. These concerns have included traffic and fire access on Old Cazadero Road. We are also thankful for Johannes Hoevertz' and Steve Mosiurchak's perspectives on these key issues.

We have changed our arrival & departure protocols. Before, arrivals were scheduled between 4-5 pm. We will now encourage guests to arrive between 10 am and 5 pm. Departures will now occur anytime during the final day.

Wildwood has prepared an Emergency Action Plan in coordination with Steven Baxman, Fire Chief for our Monte Rio Fire Protection District. This document is included in the staff report. It states that we will monitor weather alerts during fire season. In the event of a Red Flag warning, issued prior to an actual fire when dry hot winds and other conditions make a fire likely, we will assemble our guests, advise of the potential danger, and ask them to prepare to evacuate. Should a fire then be reported and a Voluntary Evacuation Notice announced, Wildwood will cancel events and direct our guests to leave at an orderly pace. If a mandatory evacuation notice is later issued, the road will have been cleared for neighbors and fire equipment.

Wildwood will pay for three signs on Old Cazadero Road instructing downhill traffic to yield to oncoming traffic. We have made our 20,000 gallon pool and 10,000 gallon water tanks available to fire equipment. We have offered CalFire sites on our property for their emergency water tanks and emergency area GMRS radio repeater in discussions with the county CalFire and State Fire Marshal.

We assure our neighbors that no logging trucks will result from our reopening, as was clarified in the rezoning conversations and stipulated in our Conservation Easement.

We have prepared architectural and engineering permit documents, and have begun plancheck review for reopening.

Thank you all for listening. We are excited to move Wildwood Retreat toward reopening, and are happy to answer any questions.