



RIVER RIDGE RANCH

Community Newsletter • Fall 2026

★ For the Good of the Many, with Respect for the Individual ★



Hello, Neighbors! This is your fall newsletter. Cooler days, warmer neighbors. We hope you find it useful.



A Note from Your Board — RRR Fall Roundup

The Texas heat has finally given us a break — so of course we're filling your inbox.

A few board notes: Jerry Brown stepped down as Treasurer, and we thank him for all his help. He will continue lending a hand with the gate, commons, and day-to-day issues.

Ronni Croslin, a former Treasurer, was appointed to fill the vacancy until the next election. Kevin Hansen was appointed to the ACC in May.

 Fall Clean-up will be **October 17**. The next Board meeting is November 12. If you have questions, ideas, or a little time to help, reach out to any board member.

Our annual meeting will be held at 10:00 am, January 30, 2027 at the First United Methodist Church in Killeen.

Fall Townhall – Appetizers, Cider and Questions

Fall is here, the leaves are pretending to change color (Texas style), and your Board is once again inviting you to a completely low-pressure, just-us-neighbors Townhall. We'll supply the cold cider. You bring a favorite appetizer (or snack... or just yourself) and a chair if you like. Come share what's on your mind, ask the Board anything, swap stories, and enjoy some good company while the sun sets over the park. No formal anything. Just cider, conversation, and the chance to remind each other that living here is pretty great. Hope to see many of you there — we'll be the ones holding the cider pitcher and smiling! Be sure to drag *(we mean)* **invite** your neighbor!

Saturday, October 24 • 5:00 pm • Arrowhead Park

Your RRR Dollars at Work — Reserves Snapshot

Now that capital reserves are being held in CDs to gain higher interests rates, RRR should expect to see about \$4,000 in income going back into reserves annually! Spending is generally in line with budget. Gate maintenance has already exceeded this year's \$570 budget and will need a higher amount next year. Volunteer work continues to keep contractor costs down — which is one more reason extra hands are welcome. An updated reserve study is recommended. If you have questions about how funds are used or prioritized, please ask. Open conversations help everyone stay informed.

Operations		Reserves
\$39,972		\$248,415
All figures as of.. 7/31/2026		
YTD Spent		YTD Budget
\$14,451	\$19,524	



Assessment Payment Change Reminder

APM's payment processor has made some changes. If you previously had autopay set up for your POA dues, you will need to set up autopay again. If you have any issues, you can get help by emailing admin@ascensionpm.com or by calling 512-255-1671.



If you pay by mail, please allow at least 20 days. Snail mail is a real thing these days.

Calling All Ranch Helpers

Our spring and fall workdays knock out the big jobs. It's everything in between that could use a hand. There's a steady list of small monthly and quarterly items that keep the place looking good, and right now it lands on just a few people.

We are working to build a list of people willing to help. When something comes up and you're free, jump in. When you're not, just say so. Nobody's keeping score. No experience needed and no standing meetings. Every hour a neighbor puts in is an hour we don't pay a contractor for, and that keeps our costs down. If you're willing to be on the list, reply to this email or grab any board member. We'd be glad to have you.

A Friendly Note About Our Trails

Now that the weather has cooled off, our trails are even more inviting for walking, horseback riding, and just enjoying the quiet. Unfortunately, we've also had a few recent sightings of ATVs and other motorized vehicles on the trails.

Just a gentle reminder: **all motorized vehicles are prohibited on the trails**. These paths are meant for feet, hooves, and the occasional very determined deer — not engines.

We know it's tempting when the weather is nice but keeping the trails motor-free helps protect the peaceful rural character we all love (and keeps the dust, noise, and unexpected surprises to a minimum).

Your Front Door — Gate Operations & Updates

The entrance has had a little tune-up to make coming and going smoother for everyone. The RFID reader was moved to the right side of the lane, so tags read more reliably, and traffic flows a bit better (especially handy on busy days). Smaller door-style cards do not read as well as the regular-sized tags and stickers. If your card is fussy, that may be why. The cameras have been repaired too.

Please keep a Gate Emergency Contacts card in each vehicle and save the numbers on your phone. If the gate ever has one of its off days, those numbers beat a staring contest with the keypad.



Pictured: Gulf Fritillary & Vinca

Garden Patch — Fall is the Perfect Time to Plant

Here's a little secret most Texas gardeners eventually learn the hard way: fall is actually a better planting season than spring around here. The soil is still warm, the air is cooler, and the brutal summer heat is (*mostly*) behind us. That means newly planted trees, shrubs, and perennials can put their energy into growing strong roots instead of just trying to survive.

This fall is a great time to plant things like 🌳 Native trees (*Live Oak, Texas Redbud, Mexican Plum, Desert Willow*) 🌿 Evergreen shrubs 🌾 Ornamental grasses 🥬 Cool-season vegetables and herbs (*garlic, onions, kale, broccoli, parsley*) 🌻 Wildflower seeds for a beautiful spring show. No need to go crazy — even one or two well-chosen plants can make a big difference next year. And if you've had a plant or two that just didn't make it through the summer... well, join the club. We've all been there. What's on your fall planting list?

New Faces & Friendly Waves — Welcome!

Warm welcome to two households joining us this season. 🌿 Brian Pohl & Angela Rainwater are settling into their home here at RRR (129 Lakeway). 🐘 Ron & Linda Williams will soon be moving into their newly built house (2062 RRR Rd.). We're glad you're both here and hope RRR feels like home quickly — trails, quiet evenings, friendly waves, and all.

Directory note: The community directory was updated in July. If you'd like update your information, or opt out, just let a board member or the Welcome Committee know. No pressure — we're neighbors first.

Docs Update — Rules First, Then the Bigger Documents

The Board is continuing the governing-documents work, with a change in order: Rules and Regulations first, then CC&Rs and Bylaws.

Why: a legal review of the current documents and proposed amendments is needed to stay aligned with Texas law. A preliminary review is estimated at about \$1,000; follow-on work could bring the total near \$5,000. The CC&Rs require member approval for legal services of that scope outside of what was budgeted for 2026.

The Board will review draft Rules items one at a time beginning September 14, aiming for a version to be presented for Board approval at the November 12 meeting.

Thank you for the patience and input already shared through the survey and spring Town Hall. Our intention is still the same: clearer, fairer rules that protect the rural character we value and work in daily life.

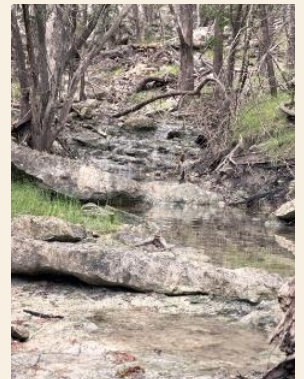
Park & Trails Tales — Especially now that the weather is cooperating!

Good news first: Crestwood Trail and Lake Shore Trail are open! The picture on the right was taken on Crestwood Trail. It's one of our rugged trails (steep and rocky) but filled with beautiful views and flowing water during the rainy season.

Trail Map: Not sure where the trails are, or worried about getting turned around? Our trail system is on a free phone app called Avenza Maps, and the map covers the whole neighborhood, not just the trails. Open this link on your phone to get the map: <https://link.avenza.com/Dgiy>

Or download the Avenza Maps app, tap Discover, and search for RRR - River Ridge Ranch Trail Map. Out on the trail, open the map and tap GPS. Blue dot = you. Both the app and the map are free.

Park News: With a lot of work, our parks have largely recovered from the flooding of the last couple of years. Expect to see a few changes: new movable picnic tables closer to the river, rebuilding the bridge to its original design, and shifting some contractor mowing from low-use areas to the river ramps. Keeping those ramps clear through the summer months will also take some volunteer help.



Voting Dates — A Simple Civic Reminder

This is information only. The Association does not endorse candidates or measures. We're just saving you a scramble later.

Register by: Monday, October 5, 2026

Early voting: Monday, October 19 through Friday, October 30, 2026

Election Day: Tuesday, November 3, 2026, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Check your registration and polling place at VoteTexas.gov or the Bell County Elections Office. A few minutes now beats discovering in the driveway that something expired last year.

Practical Tip — Cooler Weather Prep

The evenings are finally cooling off, which means two things: we can walk the property without passing out, and a few small chores are much easier now than after the first real rain.

Worth a quick look:

 Outdoor lights and path markers — so you are not guessing where the driveway went

 Debris that likes to wash into drainage areas when fall storms arrive

 Fence lines, while the weather is still pleasant and the snakes are slightly less ambitious

A short walk now can save a longer, wetter walk later. If you have a simple tip that actually works at RRR, send it our way. We are all still learning this place.

Wells & Water — A Gentle Nudge

We all live on well water, which means our well houses are doing the work a city water plant does. It's amazing water (makes great tortillas) and a reason to treat it like a shared pantry than an unlimited tap.

A few neighborly habits that other well communities use, and that actually help your own well as much as the aquifer:

-  Water landscapes early or late, not in the heat of the day
-  Fix the drip that "isn't that bad" (it usually is)
-  Prefer native plants and less thirsty lawn
-  Let the pump rest between big outdoor jobs instead of running it all afternoon

You can check Middle and Lower Trinity levels at the RRR website. Our R&Rs have a designated area dealing with water conservation with useful information about how to conserve water and definitions about stages of water restrictions. Clearwater Underground Water Conservation District reports that over the past seven years the Lower Trinity declined about 43 feet and the Middle Trinity about 27 feet. Clearwater is more concerned about the Middle Trinity. Good household habits still matter. More information can be found on the last page.

This is a friendly reach-out, not a new rule. Use what you need. Waste a little less when you can.

RRR Moments – Life at the Front Gate

Gate Team at work: moving the reader to the right for better traffic flow and card reading. Thanks Jesse and Kevin for doing the work in a heat wave while the rest of us just needed to get home.



Quick Q&A

Q: Where do I get a car sticker/tag for gate entrance?

A: At the website www.RiverRidgeRanch.org Log in, select the button that says RFID Car Tags. Then click the link provided. The first tag is free and additional tags are \$21.12

Fun Facts

Did You Know? Bell County was named after Peter Bell, the third Governor of Texas. Early settlers in the area found abundant wildlife - including deer, wild turkeys, and even occasional alligators. The Chisholm Trail once passed nearby. Today we still enjoy the peaceful rural character they helped create.

Feedback

This newsletter is meant to be useful and a little enjoyable. What should we include next? Your photo of a great view? A question for Q&A?

Reply to the email or mention it to any board member.

Thank you for being part of River Ridge Ranch this fall.

"We're grateful to call this place home with you. Let's keep working, laughing, and looking out for one another."

Susanne (susanne.m.fratzke@gmail.com), Kevin (kevinpare@gmail.com), Ronni (rbcroslin@gmail.com),
Larry (larry_james@icloud.com), Tracy (tracyrick@outlook.com)

THE TRINITY TWINS ARE FEELING THIRSTY

RRR groundwater, explained • Plus easy ways to conserve well water

Meet the twins: RRR has two monitoring wells. Lower Trinity is dropping faster than the official target. Middle Trinity is getting slurped from the south.

LOWER TRINITY • THE DEEP ONE

43 FEET

dropped in 7 years since our monitoring well was drilled

Just over 6 feet every year. That's a grown person vanishing underground annually. Not a magic trick we want on repeat.

Official target (DFC): 5.5 ft / year. Desired Future Conditions are the region's "please don't drop faster than this" number. We're a little over the speed limit.

So what? This well is losing water faster than planners hoped. This is a slow-down sign, not a sky-is-falling poster.

MIDDLE TRINITY • THE STRESSED ONE

27 FEET

same 7 years • just under 4 feet per year

Official target (DFC): 2.28 ft / year. We're dropping faster than the plan — close to twice the desired rate. That's the uncomfortable math.

Summer yo-yo on the south line. Wells along Bell County's southern border can drop 30–40 feet in summer. They bounce back in winter. Then they drop again.

The plot twist: The bigger problem isn't only what Bell County pumps. Look south of here.

THE NEIGHBOR WITH NO SPEED LIMIT

Williamson County, immediately south of us, has no Groundwater Conservation District. Pumping there is generally unregulated. Growing towns plus a growth of quarries are draining the Middle Trinity quickly. Water does not respect county lines — when they slurp, southern Bell County wells feel it first.

BE A WATER HERO (no cape required)

Here in Texas, most household water is used outdoors. Start with one tiny habit this week.

1. Hunt the drip.

A leaky faucet can waste 1,000+ gallons a year. That's a hot-tub of oops.

2. Water before sunrise.

Dawn beats noon evaporation. Soak deeper, less often.

3. Mulch like you mean it.

Three inches of mulch is a cheap raincoat for soil.

4. Same shine, less encore.

Get clean, then hop out while the mirror is still fogged. The well treats that like a thank-you note.

5. Driveway dust — meet broom.

A quick sweep usually does the job, and it keeps that water in the well for the stuff you care about.

6. Full loads only.

Half-empty washers and dishwashers are just expensive indoor fountains.

7. Fire the thirsty lawn.

Swap water-hungry turf for Texas natives that already know drought.

8. Watch the well.

If use climbs while nobody is home, you have a secret fountain.

9. Let the lawn go quiet in August

Brown isn't dead — it's napping. Most Texas grass greens up when the rain comes back, and the well gets summer off.

10. Cover the pool. Use a nozzle.

Uncovered pools and open hoses are evaporation machines in a Texas summer.

The aquifer is keeping score — and it has a long memory.

Links to our two well monitors found at RRR's website:



Lower Trinity: <https://waterdatafortexas.org/groundwater/well/5802303>

Middle Trinity: <https://waterdatafortexas.org/groundwater/well/5802304>

Our Bell County groundwater is managed by Clearwater Underground Water Conservation District • cuwcd.org

Figures are local well observations over 7 years and current Desired Future Conditions (DFC).

Feedback always welcome

River Ridge Ranch • Killeen / Bell County, Texas