

SWARM  
PO Box 869  
Willits, CA 95490  
January 30, 2017

Dear neighbors,

We wanted to give you all an update regarding this years billing. You will notice an increase in your yearly dues. We have heard your frustration with the roads and agree that we need to do more. The issue is, we have a very small budget and many of miles of roads to maintain. As such the Board has increased the dues to address your concerns. The base rate (the amount that everyone pays) in 2016 was \$189. We are increasing this in 2017 by 20%, which is \$226.80. There will be no increase on the charge per mile.

With the increasing cost of gravel and getting the roads graded we have been unable to keep up with the maintenance we would like to do. Although this is a modest increase, it will enable us to keep pace with the rising cost of the road maintenance. To that end the Board is also looking to a similar increase next year as well so we can get ahead of some of the work required. Additionally, we will be eliminating the 'non-resident' exemption in 2018. All parcels will be billed in 2018 as 'resident'. We have been doing our best to keep the dues down, we have some of the lowest road association dues around, but we are been unable to maintain the current rates and keep the roads maintained.

As you are all aware the culverts throughout the Gates are close to 40 years old. Many of them are failing and in need of repair. Culvert replacement is very expensive and we have been differing this work in order to keep the roads in good condition. It puts us in a very difficult situation of having to choose how best to spend the small budget we have.

The Board is in discussion with the county to get a grant for culvert repair throughout the Gates. We hope to find out sometime next summer whether we will get the grant or not. If we get the grant this will go a long way in improving our roads, allowing us to replace the culverts and maintain the roads within our existing budget.

The Board also applied for a Cal Fire grant that would have cut back vegetative matter (low branches, dead trees, bushes, etc.) 10 feet on both sides of all our roads. We did not get this, although we were encouraged to apply again next year. So it is up to all of us to make our roads safer by cutting grass, bushes, dead trees, and low branches alongside the roads. By doing so your efforts will enable emergency vehicles to come in and out, as well as ourselves and fire trucks in the event of a fire.

The Board would like to thank you all for your patience and understanding as we try to do our best to maintain a safe and reliable road system for all. Call us anytime and visit the SWARM website at <http://sherwoodgates.org/> for more information. Contact information is on the website.

Sincerely,

SWARM Board