



# *The Hearth at Highlands Ranch Homeowners Association*

## **The Hearth Water Drainage Update**

**JULY 2007 MEETING NOTES**

**NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29, 2007 AT 7:00PM**

Representatives Matt Williams and Marcia Ivarson from Douglas County attended the July 26<sup>th</sup> meeting to answer community concerns about water drainage issues. Matt Williams reported that Douglas County funded a Geo-technological (soil expert) study to determine the source of the water causing algae and ice build-up on sidewalks. The draft of this study is being reviewed; as soon as it is finalized, a copy will be posted on The Hearth's web site.

Prior to starting development at The Hearth, the core samples taken were 90% dry. Some of the problem may be due to the fact that the core samples were taken in drought years, and the recent weather has been considerably wetter. The soil type is predominately clay; most of the rest of Highlands Ranch is sandy. This may explain why they have not seen this problem previously and did not anticipate it here.

Possible sources of the water include over watering of landscape. Installation of new sod requires more water to take root. If so, some of the problem may be alleviated as the community matures. Also, the lots were often over excavated to mitigate high swelling soils. This entire area now acts as a "bath tub" whose excess water is being taken out by your sump pump. If the sump pump does not discharge far enough out, the water just re-cycles and your pump may be running almost constantly.

Homeowner concerns about the excess water flowing over sidewalks has led to installation of some chase drains to direct the excess water under the sidewalk and out into the street for drainage. The County's Road and Bridge Department has already spent its entire budget for this type of repair for 2007. Additional names and addresses are being put on a list for future years. Thirty drains were installed this year; there are another 110 names on the list already.

If your street is new and has not yet been accepted by the County for maintenance; the Builder may be required by the County to add chase drains, now that the problem has been identified. It is important that your address be on the list in these cases so the problem can be alleviated sooner than it would be if the County has to make the repair. E-mail your information to [MIvarson@Douglas.co.us](mailto:MIvarson@Douglas.co.us) or fax it to Marcia's attention at 303-688-9343. The County has an updated list of which streets have or have not been accepted. Include your name, address, contact information, and a description of the problems at your address. If you have already contacted Marcia, you do not need to do so again; she will already have you on the list.

If your home is still in the 1-year warranty period, you may have some leverage with the builder to have chase drains installed. You may even choose to install the drains at your own expense. You will need a County permit and will need to use an approved contractor. The County is looking at other solutions. One fix may be to install a trench drain behind the sidewalk and hard pipe the water into the street. Another may be to install drains in front of the lip of the gutter.

Prevention recommendations from the county were distributed at the meeting. Based on detailed data from the water department, large numbers of homeowners are over watering. Even if you don't see the problem at your house, you may be contributing to it elsewhere. If your lot is above your neighbor's, they may be suffering because you are contributing excess water to the system. Water flows downhill!

- Follow recommended water amounts as outlined by the Centennial Water & Sanitation District (visit website at [www.highlandsranch.org](http://www.highlandsranch.org))
- Make sure sump pump and downspout discharge is located outside backfill zone (typically 5-feet from the foundation walls)
- If possible, drainage swale should not be located in backfill zone
- Do not combine downspout flow with sump pump discharge pipe
- Avoid burying downspouts. If buried make sure they daylight outside of backfill zone
- Make sure ground slopes away from foundation walls for the first 10-feet away from the foundation wall (or to property line if less than a 10-foot set-back)

A final note about liability issues. People are slipping and falling due to these problems. Homeowners are responsible for maintenance of the sidewalk; the County is responsible for installation. If someone slips and falls in front of your home; they may sue both. You can help your liability by keeping the algae and ice cleared off of your sidewalk. This may sound unfair, but you will be creating a safer environment for everyone.

**Next meeting: AT 7:00PM on Wednesday, August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at the Southridge Recreation Center:** 4800 MacArthur Ranch Road, upstairs in the Back Country Auditorium. The builders have all been invited to attend, along with the Douglas County representatives. Homeowners with drainage issues are encouraged to put this on their calendar and plan to attend this homeowner forum.

Thank you,

*Lynne Kraft*

Director of Community Management Services, CMCA, AMS

**THE HEARTH AT HIGHLANDS RANCH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**