

Fire Department conducts valuable training at Wilderness Country Club

Cone Communications

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Local firefighters and other first responders took advantage of a unique opportunity to train on the current clubhouse at Wilderness Country Club as the club plans to replace it with a brand-new building.

The Greater Naples Fire Rescue District used the 48-year-old building just off Goodlette-Frank Road for search-and-rescue training exercises over two weeks before the structure is demolished in September.

Partnerships, like the one with Wilderness Country Club, are important in that they offer hands-on training for firefighters that would otherwise be difficult to come by. The multi-agency training also helps the fire department in achieving necessary certifications. One unique aspect of the Wilderness clubhouse is that it included a basement, which is a rarity among buildings in Southwest Florida.

“We are thankful to Wilderness Country Club for generously donating their former clubhouse for our training exercises,” said Rusty Godette, Captain, Training and Special Operations for the Greater Naples Fire Rescue District. “The opportunity to use the old clubhouse was invaluable and enabled our team to simulate a variety of real-life scenarios involving search and rescue in a controlled environment.”

Wilderness Country Club plans to begin construction of a completely new clubhouse later this year. Designed by McWard Architects Inc. of Naples, the new two-story, 26,000-square-foot building will replace the old clubhouse, which originally opened shortly after Wilderness was founded in 1974.

The new clubhouse will showcase an Old Florida architectural style with panoramic views of the club's championship golf course. The building will provide an expanded outdoor dining experience, a larger bar area and a new pro shop. There also will be a private Wilderness Room dedicated for small group gatherings like card playing, family parties, wine tastings and other club member events.

The interior of the new building will feature an island inspired classic design by renowned interior designer Amanda Lindroth. With offices in Palm Beach, Charleston and Nassau, Bahamas, Lindroth has provided design services for a number of high-end residential and country club projects worldwide.

"We are in the site development process and our general contractor D. Garrett Construction anticipates starting ground work and vertical construction this fall with the new clubhouse opening to our members by the end of 2023," said Alan Raulerson, General Manager/Chief Operating Officer for Wilderness Country Club. "This keeps us on pace to celebrate the Club's milestone 50th anniversary in 2024."

Located on 200 forested acres, Wilderness Country Club is an established community featuring an 18-hole, Arthur Hills golf course and a full practice area where golfers of all skill levels can work on their game at the driving range, short-game area, and putting green. Each club member has the option to walk the course any time of day or take their own private golf cart, and there are never any trail fees.

Other amenities include a vibrant tennis and POP Tennis program and a complete schedule of seasonal activities. Five salt water and heated swimming pools are conveniently interspersed throughout the community, which promote social interactions of all residents as they are not segregated by building.

Residents also enjoy Frank Park, a private five-acre site dedicated to the pioneering Frank family. The park includes numerous specimen trees and shrubs from around the world as well as four Har-Tru bocce courts and a regulation-size croquet court where members can enjoy spirited competition. Also, within the property is a dedicated Dog Park area where members and their four-legged friends can mingle.

Wilderness Country Club has been designated as an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary for over 20 years, making it the ideal place to photograph more than 80 species of birds, including Bald Eagles, Ospreys, White Ibis, Anhingas, Great Blue Herons, Red Shouldered Hawks, Barred Owls and Swallow Tail Kites. The lush surroundings provide an ideal location for the Conservancy of Southwest Florida to use as a safe place to return rehabilitated animals, such as turtles, hawks and owls, to their native environment.

Located on the east side of Goodlette-Frank Road just north of Golden Gate Parkway, Wilderness Country Club holds the distinction of being the very first private, gated golf course community with a mandatory membership built in Naples. It is conveniently located just minutes from the restaurants, shops, arts and entertainment on Fifth Avenue South and white, sandy beaches of the Gulf of Mexico.

For additional information or to view available properties for sale within this private, gated golf course community, call Wilderness Country Club at 239-261-6060 or visit online at www.wildernesscc.com