

Living in the Mountains

A Timber Lakes Property Owner's Guide

Originally Written By Clayton Walquist

Revised by the TLPOA Board of Directors

April 2008, January 2015

Introduction

Having a home or cabin in the mountains is a dream for many people. Some want to spend the weekends at their mountain hide-away, some want a summer home, and some want a cabin as their year-round home. Whichever dream is yours, you may find it in Timber Lakes. Whether you plan to make Timber Lakes your home or just your retreat, you should become aware of some of the important realities of living in the mountains. It is important that you know that life in the mountains is different from life in the city and you need to be prepared. The Timber Lakes Property Owners Association and Wasatch County are not able to provide the same level of service that larger cities and towns provide. Before you purchase property or build a home in the mountains, you should consider the limitations living in the mountains would have on transportation, communication, education, health care, employment and public services. This guide is intended to help you decide if owning property in Timber Lakes is right for you.

Timber Lakes

The Timber Lakes Estates Subdivision is a gated private community located approximately seven (7) miles east of Heber City Utah. The subdivision has 1504 lots, which average approximately one acre in size. Within the subdivision, there are approximately 900 dwellings. The elevation at the entrance is 6600 feet above sea level and rises to over 9000 feet above sea level. There are approximately 3 miles of paved road and in excess of 30 miles of gravel roads. The area is wooded with the lower elevations populated by oak brush and the higher elevations populated with aspens and firs. There are several small lakes and ponds. Deer, moose, fox, raccoons, porcupines, squirrels, chipmunks, badgers and many varieties of birds inhabit the area. Occasionally coyotes, mountain lions, elk and bear have been spotted within the subdivision.

Timber Lakes Property Owners Association

The Timber Lakes Property Owners Association (TLPOA) is a private non-profit Utah corporation. The members of the Association are lot owners within the Timber Lakes Estates Subdivision. The Association was organized in 1979. TLPOA has title ownership to the roads and common property within the subdivision.

Roads and Access

The roads in Timber Lakes are private roads owned by the TLPOA. There are over 30 miles of gravel roads within the subdivision. The Association has started a road improvement effort to bring the roads to a traveled surface of twenty-feet wide with four-foot bar-ditches. Because of the significant elevation change from the entrance to the upper-end, many of the roads are steep and narrow.

The fact that you can drive to your property today does not necessarily guarantee that you, your guests or even emergency service vehicles (the Sheriff, an ambulance, a fire truck) can get there 100 % of the time due to storms and other local climate changes. Please consider the following:

- You drive at your own risk in Timber Lakes.
- Unpaved roads often “washboard” when dry and dusty, and become muddy and slippery when wet. You may experience an increase in vehicle maintenance costs when you regularly travel on rural roads.
- Gravel roads generate dust. The Association does not treat the roads to suppress dust. You should keep this in mind when purchasing property or planning to build along gravel roads.
- In extreme winter weather, some roads may become impassable. You may need a four-wheel drive vehicle, snow tires and/or chains, and perhaps even another mode of transportation to travel under those conditions. Living in a rural area means developing special driving skills and good judgment. Driving off the road to avoid bad road sections can make a situation worse, tearing up road banks and accelerating erosion. (Don’t do it!)
- Chains or 4-wheel drive are required on all snow-packed roads.
- The Association does plow all roads during the winter months. Snow removal is divided into five priority groups. The paved portion of Lakes Pines is generally first to be plowed. The second priority will be Blue Spruce Drive and the third priority will be Ridge Line Drive. The fourth priority will be the remaining roads, which will be cleared as time and staff are available. During times of heavy snowfall or equipment problems the fourth and fifth priority level roads may not be plowed for several days. Keeping in mind that your road may not be plowed by the time you need to leave for work or school, you should have appropriate contingency plans in place.
 - It is not unusual for the snowplow to block your driveway with snow as it passes by. As it is in the city, it is your responsibility to clear your own driveway. Pushing the snow from your driveway into the main road is against the property owners’ rules.
- Response times for emergency services cannot be guaranteed. Under some conditions, you may find that emergency response is extremely slow due to circumstances beyond the control of emergency service providers.

- Many large construction vehicles cannot navigate steep and narrow gravel roads. If you plan to build, check out construction access. Rural residences can be more costly to build due to delivery fees and costs required to get materials to your site. Private driveways should be wide and sturdy enough to support either emergency or construction vehicles.
- School buses travel only on county, state, or federal roads that have been designated as school bus routes by the school district. You will have to drive your children to the nearest bus stop so they can get to school. Call the Administration Office of the school district in which your children will be attending school to find out the school bus boarding area closest to your property.
- Mail is not delivered to each individual lot. To receive mail you must either have a Post Office box in Heber or arrange for one of the mailboxes down by the gate. Contact the TLPOA office to make those arrangements.
- Newspaper, parcel and overnight package delivery may not always be available in rural areas. Check with the agencies that provide these services before assuming you can get delivery. TLPOA is not responsible for packages left in the mail house.
- Learn to solve your own problems. Costs are kept down by the willingness of the members to go without many things suburban and urban people regard as necessities. Rural people cherish their independence and are willing to take care of their own needs.

Utilities

Water, sewer, electric, telephone and other services may be unavailable or may not operate at urban standards. Repairs can often take much longer than in towns and cities. Please review the following:

- Telephone communications can be a problem, especially in mountainous areas. Cellular phones may not work in all areas. All West Communications in Kamas, Utah is the service provider for Timber Lakes.
- Electric service fees usually consist of a one-time hook-up fee and, thereafter, your monthly bill. You may also have to pay the cost of running a line from the main trunk line to your property. It is important to know all costs before making a decision to purchase a specific piece of property. Electric power may not be available in both two-phase and three-phase service configurations. If you have special power requirements, it is important to know what level of service can be provided to your property. Heber Light & Power provides electrical service to the Timber Lakes area. Contact their offices for answers to any questions you may have.
- Power outages are a fact of rural living and may be frequent and lengthy. An outage can turn off your freezer, refrigerator, heat source, computer, etc. Be prepared!
- Sewer service is not available. You will need to use an on-site waste disposal (septic system) approved by Wasatch County. Soil type, depth to ground water or bedrock, stream and river setbacks, and slope are important elements in determining the cost

and operation of your system. The results of your percolation test and the steepness of the slopes will determine if a septic tank may be installed on your property and where it must be placed. Contact the Wasatch County Health Department for septic system requirements.

- The Timber Lakes water supply is for culinary use only. No outside watering is allowed. During winter months, some lines may freeze and water service may be interrupted for several weeks at a time. As a rural resident you will need to be prepared to deal with such inconveniences. Because of the terrain and extreme winter weather conditions, the cost of supplying water to your cabin will be more expensive than in the city. Check with the Timber Lakes Water Special Service District (the Water Company) for current pricing. Please note that the Water Company is a separate entity from the TLPOA. We are not the Water Company.
- Propane fuel is used by most in Timber Lakes for heating and appliances. There are several companies who service our community. You should consider filling your propane tanks prior to the Oct. 15th, when driving conditions can become a challenge for large vehicles. Plus, historically, the cost for propane is less before the winter months. The Wasatch Fire District suggests propane tanks be buried for safety reasons.
- The Wasatch Fire District recommends regular cleanings of your chimney, to prevent fire hazards.
- It is important to be able to survive for several days or more in severe cold with no utilities if you live in the mountains.
- Curbside trash pick-up is not available in Timber Lakes. Dumpsters have been provided near the gate, and you are responsible for depositing your trash there. Construction waste may not be deposited in the dumpsters. You are responsible for hauling all construction waste to the county landfill. Animal-proof refuse containers will be helpful in between trips to the dumpster. TLPOA encourages recycling and recycle bins are provided next to our office.

The Property

There are many issues that can affect your property. It is important to research these items before purchasing land.

- You may be provided with a plat of your property. Do not assume the plat is accurate unless the land has been surveyed and pins placed by a licensed surveyor. Do not begin building until a survey has been completed. A survey of the land is the only way to confirm the legal boundaries of your property.
- The TLPOA must approve all building plans to insure that they are in compliance with our Architectural Guidelines and Protective Covenants.
- A county-issued building permit is required for the construction of most buildings in Wasatch County. You should verify all permits required by contacting the Wasatch County Planning Department.

- Not all lots in Timber Lakes are buildable. The development of a lot may be affected by geological hazards (such as slide areas), wetlands, streams, rivers, and lakes. Development constraints, extra costs, special studies and/or permits may be required for development of lots or portions of lots affected by its physical characteristics and attributes. If you intend to purchase a lot, check with the Wasatch County Planning Department to verify that a cabin can be built on the property. You may also refer to the geological hazard map at the County.
- There are protective covenants that govern the use of property in Timber Lakes. It is important that you obtain a copy of those covenants and make sure that you can live with those rules before you buy a lot in Timber Lakes. A copy of those covenants can be obtained from the TLPOA office inside the gate or on the website.
- The TLPOA collects annual assessments. The bylaws for the Association will tell you how the organization operates and how assessments are set. The current amount of the assessments and a copy of the bylaws may be obtained from the TLPOA office.
- The view from your property may change. The surrounding properties will probably not remain as they are indefinitely. The Wasatch County Planning Commission can tell you how the surrounding areas are zoned, and if there are plans for future development.
- Property owners in Timber Lakes do not own the mineral, grazing, or water rights associated with their property.

Recreation

- Timber Lakes is surrounded by privately held property that is posted No Trespassing. Snowmobiles, ATVs, motorcycles, horses, pedestrians, etc. are not allowed on those private lands, and there are no access routes to public lands across any of those properties.
- While ATVs and other recreational vehicles are allowed on some Timber Lakes roads, please be considerate of those who come to Timber Lakes to enjoy the peace and quiet and serenity of the mountains. Allowing your family members or guests to constantly ride in circles near someone else's cabin ruins others' enjoyment of their mountain retreat.
- Recreational vehicles are not allowed on any private property within Timber Lakes or on any TLPOA common property. Do not allow your family members or guests to "blaze trails" across someone else's property or across any common property held by the TLPOA. Recreational vehicles must be used only on the roads.

Mother Nature

Rural residents usually experience more problems when the elements and earth turn unfriendly. Here are some thoughts to consider:

- The physical characteristics of your property can be positive or negative. Trees are a wonderful environmental amenity, but also provide fuel for forest fires. Building at the top of a forested draw should be considered as dangerous as building in a flash

flood area. Forest fires are not uncommon in Utah's mountains. Defensible perimeters are very helpful in protecting buildings from forest fires and, inversely, can protect the forest from igniting if your house catches on fire. If you start a forest fire, you may get the bill to put it out. Contact the Wasatch County fire district for more information. Open fires are not permitted in Timber Lakes under any circumstances.

- Pay attention to the “lay of the land.” Land topography can tell you where the water will go during heavy precipitation. Sometimes, landowners fill a ravine only to find that the water that drained through that ravine now drains through their home. Low areas will collect water when snow melts or large rain events occur. Take your property's topology into account when siting structures and other developments.
- Educate yourself about living in the wild. Nature can provide you with some wonderful neighbors. Timber Lakes enjoys a diverse wildlife population. However, even “harmless” animals like deer can cross the road unexpectedly and cause an accident. Rural development encroaches on the traditional habitat of coyotes, bobcats, mountain lions, foxes, prairie dogs, snakes, bears, mosquitoes and other animals that can be dangerous, and you need to know how to deal with them. In general, it is best to enjoy wildlife from a distance and know that if you do not handle your pets and trash properly, it could cause problems for you and the wildlife.
- Moving to the country is not a license to let pets roam. Even gentle, beloved family pets can become nuisances, predators, or prey to wild animals. Pets found attacking or harassing wildlife can be impounded. Timber Lakes' bylaws require that all dogs be kept on a leash or confined to the owner's property.
- No hunting of any kind is allowed inside Timber Lakes. It is illegal to discharge a firearm within the Timber Lakes Subdivision.

Our Neighbors and Friends

The Association has important relationships with several entities on and around the mountain. Our members should be acquainted with these relationships and help foster a good neighbor atmosphere.

- Timber Lakes Water Special Services District. The Wasatch County Council established and oversees the Timber Lakes Water Special Services District (the Water Company). The Water Company is responsible for developing and maintaining the springs that provide water to TLPOA. They also maintain the water delivery system. While the TLPOA and the Water Company are separate entities, the Association considers it crucial that we work together to meet the water needs of our members.
- Heber Valley Camp. The Heber Valley Camp (the Camp) is created by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Church) to serve the needs of Young Women, families and Church groups in central and northern Utah. The Camp is located on a tract of land covering more than 8,000 acres adjacent to the west side of the TLPOA subdivision. Elevation of the camp ranges from 7,500-10,000 feet. The first two camps were completed and first used during the summer of 2003. Additional camps have been added each year and construction is

expected to continue for several more years. When completed, the Camp is expected to have the capacity to host over 5,000 campers at a time. While its primary purpose is to serve the Church's Young Women Camp program, it is also available to be used by other Church and family groups when not in use by the Young Women. We share fire exits, water and other resources with the Camp. The Camp has granted TLPOA members snowmobile access through a portion of their property to allow quick access to the National Forest land at the top of our subdivision. In return, the Association has promised to keep its snowmobiling members on the marked trail through the Camp property. It is crucial to our relationship with the Camp to restrict snowmobiles to the marked trail through the Camp.

- Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest. The Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest (the Forest) was originally established by President Grover Cleveland in 1897, one year after Utah received statehood. The Forest is the first national forest in the United States and is comprised of 871,237 acres. Recreational activities in the Forest include camping, hiking, horseback riding, fishing, motor boating, hunting, mountain biking and winter sports. Motorized ATVs and Snowmobiles are allowed only on designated trails. It also includes three unspoiled wilderness areas - Lone Peak, Mount Nebo and Mount Timpanogos. While TLPOA members can access the Forest for snowmobiling through the Camp (TLPOA snowmobile permit required), there is no such access for ATVs. Our members are responsible for acquainting themselves with the designated trails in the Forest for motorized recreational vehicles.
- Private Property. The remaining acreage on the borders of the TLPOA subdivision belongs to private landowners. Our members, along with the general public, are prohibited from trespassing on private property. Inside the TLPOA subdivision, with a few exceptions, every lot is private property. Our owners (and their guests) only have the right to access their own property and the Common Areas. Motorized vehicles, including all recreational vehicles, are restricted to the maintained roads. Some property parcels inside the Timber Lakes boundaries are not part of the TLPOA. Please respect all property and property owners on the mountain.

Conclusion

The information presented here is intended as a guideline and introduction to some of the realities of rural living. It does not contain everything you need to know about living in the mountains, you may discover other issues that have not been covered. We hope this information will help you make an informed decision regarding making Timber Lakes your home or retreat. We encourage you to research and examine all aspects of country living so you can be well prepared to meet the challenges of living in the mountains.

REFERENCES

Code of the West www.co.gallatin.mt.us/code.htm

Code of the West www.co.gunnison.co.us/Planning/codeofwest.html

Code of the West, by John Clark, Larimer County, Colorado.