

Fourth Quarter Newsletter | October–December 2026 | Issue 23

Country Lakes Homeowners Association

P.O. Box 632, Mechanicsville, MD 20659
InfoCountryLakesHOA@gmail.com
301-884-7297

Happy fall, Country Lakes! This issue includes important service changes, upcoming events, and ways to help keep our community traditions going. Please consider volunteering or attending a Board meeting. **We need more neighbors involved to continue offering these activities and services.**

Board members and volunteers needed

With too few Board members and volunteers, HOA events may be canceled, postponed, or reduced; upcoming event statuses appear later in this newsletter. Past activities include cleanups, National Night Out, the annual meeting, trunk-or-treat, Santa's Visit, and yard sales. Helping with even one event makes a difference.

The **Board meets at 6 PM** on the **second Tuesday of each month** for about an hour. Meetings take place at the pavilion from April through October and on Zoom during colder months. Board members may miss up to three meetings annually. The bylaws provide for four executive officers and twelve voting Board members.

If vacancies continue, the community may need to hire a professional management company, increasing expenses and potentially raising dues. To help keep Country Lakes volunteer-managed, attend a meeting or contact **InfoCountryLakesHOA@gmail.com**.

Pavilion and community sign changes

Effective November 1, 2026, the HOA will no longer accept pavilion reservations or personal community sign requests because of the limited number of active volunteers.

The pavilion will remain available to community members on a first-come, first-served basis. Any pavilion reservations already confirmed before November 1 will be honored.

The community sign will be used for community announcements, important information, reminders, helpful tips, and neighborhood events. Personal messages, including birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, and other individual celebrations, will no longer be accepted.

Managing these requests takes considerable time and coordination. Until more residents become actively involved, we need to scale back these services. Thank you for understanding and supporting the volunteers who keep our HOA running.

Community reminders

Neighborhood safety: Please keep your home and parked vehicles locked. There have been reports of people entering vehicles at night. Remove valuables from vehicles or keep them out of sight.

Residents have also raised concerns about speeding and drivers passing school buses while children are boarding or exiting. Please slow down, watch for pedestrians, and stop for school buses when required. Help protect our neighbors and children.

If you see suspicious activity or a traffic concern, report it to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office. Please call **301-475-8008** or email the CLHA officer

Brian.Connelly@stmaryscountymd.gov with your pictures and explanation as to why you are emailing the pictures. Include the location, date, time, and a description, along with any photos or video you already have. **Call 911** for emergencies. HOA camera footage is released only to law enforcement during an active investigation.

Vehicles and Camper use: Please ensure that vehicles and trailers stored on your property comply with applicable county requirements. Questions about abandoned or inoperable vehicles should be directed to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office. For zoning, property-use, or camper-occupancy questions, contact the Department of Land Use & Growth Management at 301-475-4200, ext. 1500, or lugm@stmaryscountymd.gov.

Residents should also review the Country Lakes covenants for community restrictions on camper occupancy. Contact the Board if you need a copy or clarification.

Dues and account questions

Annual dues statements are mailed approximately 30 days before the **July 1 payment deadline**. If your account has an **outstanding balance, please contact dues management promptly to discuss payment and any available arrangements.**

Delinquent accounts may be referred to the HOA's attorney for collection. Once an account has been referred, collection-related questions and arrangements must be handled through the attorney; the Dues Manager and Board cannot resolve those matters directly.

For account questions, call **301-884-7297** or email

PropertyManagementCLHA@gmail.com. The HOA does not have a staffed office, so please allow time for a response. Email is the preferred way to contact us.

Park and walking path

Motorized recreational vehicles are not permitted on the walking path or in the park and playground areas. Please keep these spaces safe for everyone. Report suspicious activity or misconduct to the Sheriff's Office at 301-475-8008; call 911 for emergencies.

Upcoming community events

Fall yard sale extended to October 10

Saturday, October 10, 2026 Starting at 7 AM Because of the weather on October 3, many residents chose not to set up. The community fall yard sale has been extended to October 10 for anyone wishing to participate. There will be no additional rain date. Set up at the community park or at your home. Please be respectful of other sellers and share the park space equally. If you are selling at home, we encourage you to place a sign with your address at the park so shoppers can find you. Please remove your signs when the sale is over. Your unwanted items may be someone else's treasure!

Scouting for Food

Saturday, November 7, 2026 | 10 AM–2 PM | Country Lakes parking lot

Scouts BSA Venturing Crew 1785 will collect nonperishable, unexpired food items to help people in need in our local community. Please stop by with a donation. Learn more at facebook.com/crew1785.

Annual meeting and Board elections

Sunday, November 8, 2026 | 2 PM | Community pavilion

Join us to elect the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer for 2027. Please consider attending and becoming involved in the Board.

The bylaws provide for four executive officers and twelve voting Board members. At regular monthly Board meetings, voting is limited to voting Board members; other members are welcome to attend. All HOA members have the right to vote at the annual meeting and special meetings, subject to the bylaws. Candidates for an executive position must have served on the Board for at least one year.

Santa's Visit needs volunteers

Tentatively scheduled for Sunday, December 13, 2026 | Noon–2 PM | Community pavilion

Santa's Visit may have to be canceled this year unless additional volunteers step forward. Please consider helping us continue this holiday tradition for the children and families of Country Lakes. This has always been a wonderful opportunity to take a special Christmas picture with Santa close to home, enjoy hot cocoa and hot cider, and spend time with neighbors. Bring your camera if the event goes ahead! Even a little of your time can help make this event possible. To volunteer, please contact the Board at **InfoCountryLakesHOA@gmail.com**. Watch for a community update confirming whether the event will take place.

Fall cleanup canceled

The fall cleanup scheduled for September 26, 2026, was canceled. Thank you to everyone who was willing to help. Please contact the **Board if you would like to volunteer for a future cleanup**.

Community recap and contacts

Thank you for a successful National Night Out

Our August 4 National Night Out was a huge success, with more than 280 people attending. Neighbors enjoyed food, snacks, drinks, musical chairs, potato sack races, and water balloons while connecting with one another and local organizations.

A big thank you to **Weis Markets** for donating a large portion of the food and drinks, and to **Village Liquors** in Chaptico for donating the ice. We also appreciate the Weis staff who attended with giveaways.

We were honored to welcome **SMECO, the Mechanicsville fire and rescue departments, MedStar St. Mary's Hospital, the Office of Aging, St. Mary's County Animal Control, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Emergency Services, the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, Maryland State Police, and the Trooper 7 crew.**

Wet ground required the emergency vehicles to be displayed in the parking lot. Trooper 7 also visited, giving families an opportunity to see the helicopter. **Thank you to every participating organization, donor, volunteer, and neighbor who helped make the evening possible.**

Newsletter - The newsletter is scheduled for publication on January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1.

Thank you for supporting Country Lakes. Have a wonderful fall and holiday season!

The Country Lakes Homeowners Association Board

Office or Department	Phone Number
St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office	911; Nonurgent: 301-475-8008
St. Mary's County Volunteer Fire Department	911
St. Mary's County Volunteer Rescue Department	911
St. Mary's County Libraries—Charlotte Hall Library	301-884-2211
Leonardtown Library	301-475-2846
Lexington Park Library	301-863-8188
St. Mary's County Health Department	301-475-4330
St. Mary's County Board of Elections	301-475-4200
St. Mary's County Animal Control	301-475-8018
St. Mary's County Highways	301-475-4200, Ext. 3540
St. Mary's County Metcom	301-737-7400
SMECO	1-888-440-3311