

Willowbrook Community Riding Arena

By Brenda Boye

President of Willowbrook Community Society

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Figure 1 Willowbrook Drill Team practicing 2024

History

Originally a tennis court, Willowbrook Community lot number 57 (2.03 acres SH3s-Small Holdings 3 Site Specific Zoning) has been a riding arena since 1984 and is a significant asset to the Willowbrook Community. The lot itself provides access to the 480-acre Willowbrook Parkland. The park has RA-Resource Area Zoning. Additional information about Willowbrook Parkland can be found in the Willowbrook Community Parkland report.

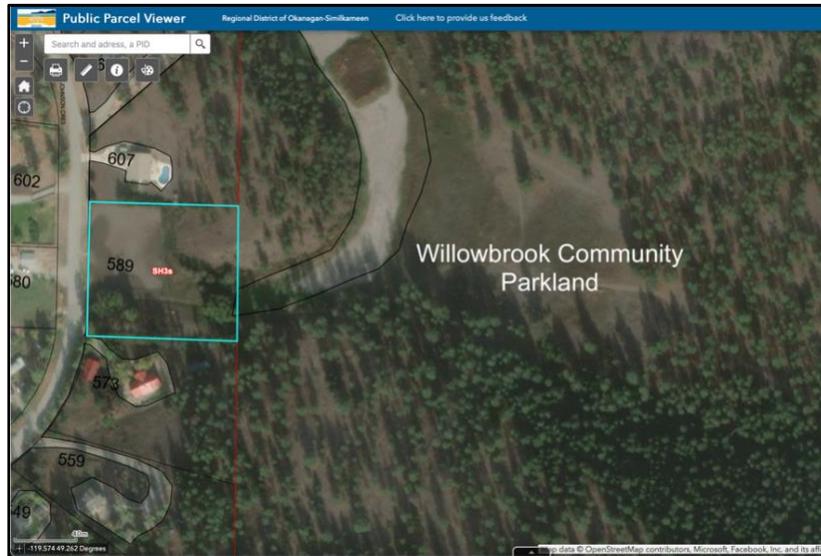


Figure 2 Aerial view of arena showing park boundary

The arena was created in 1984 by community members. \$2,000 of donations from community members went towards the construction of the arena which included posts, rails, paint and footing. Before the arena could be built, several community members, manually removed the asphalt surface of the previous tennis court. Volunteers contributed their time, money, and physical labour to build the arena in Willowbrook.



Figure 3 Painting barrels 1984



Figure 4 Bringing bridge to arena 1984



Figure 5 Digging hole for toilet at arena 1984

Willowbrook families have invested their time money, and physical labor to the maintenance and upkeep of the arena. Countless hours and funds have been donated to maintain the arena over the years. It has helped children practice for their riding tests and rodeo performances and has given new riders a safe place to practice. Equestrians from all backgrounds have relied on the Willowbrook arena.



Figure 6 Practicing barrels



Figure 7 Pony camp

Around 2018 complaints were made by neighboring residents regarding the dusty conditions when equestrians were using the arena. The Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS) mandated that dust mitigation efforts be made and in 2023 a permanent sprinkler system was installed by volunteers the Willowbrook Community Society. This system only covered the perimeter of the arena and required the use of a movable sprinkler to target the remaining areas.



Figure 9 Driving lessons



Figure 8 Obstacle play day



Figure 10 Snow day fun



Figure 11 The original Willowbrook Drill Team



Figure 12 Preparing arena 1984

In 2025 the irrigation system was vandalized and in need of repair. During this repair, an additional sprinkler was added and all sprinklers risen to 8' to create full coverage. The Oliver Riding Club accepted a proposal to use the Willowbrook Riding Arena to provide a staging area for Oliver Riding Club Activities and to have help with the arena.

It is only through the continued efforts of volunteers along with the support of the Willowbrook Community Society that we are able to enjoy this resource today.



Figure 14 Practicing jumps



Figure 13 Wagon rides

The Willowbrook Community Society has annual costs: director's insurance, annual provincial filing fees, office supplies, community events, maintenance fees etc. An annual membership fee of \$25 helps to offset these costs and is required by anybody wanting to use the arena and park, resident of Willowbrook or not. This fee is payable online at willowbrookparkland.com.



Figure 15 Equestrians in 2024

Challenges

- Dust control
- Wildlife damaging railings
- Invasive plants
 - longspine sandbur
 - puncturevine
 - spear grass
 - mustard

Management

The Willowbrook Community Society along with volunteers has been maintaining the arena since 1984. Whoa Dust application estimated Summer 2025. Partnership with Oliver Riding Club TBD at 2025 AGM. Weekly/biweekly harrowing depending on use. Annual blow out of irrigation lines. Round up has been used annually once Kearns Creek is dry to help with invasive species removal as well as monthly weed pulling. Mowing of boulevard and park entrance along with parking area.

Rules

- Must be a member of Willowbrook Parkland
- Must have HCBC Insurance
- No Dust allowed (see dust mitigation p.4)
- Use arena at your own risk
- Do not leave horses unattended
- Remove manure with fork provided
- Put obstacles away & leave tidy
- Garbage can is for weeds ONLY
- Helmets are suggested
- Do not feed hay in arena
- If arena is occupied, ask permission to enter

Dust Mitigation

We have a zero-dust policy. The RDOS requires that we do not create dust while using the arena. The surrounding neighbors do not appreciate it and will report you. Whoa Dust was purchased to help prevent dust. An automatic sprinkler system has been installed with summer times being 0600 & 1800. Spring and fall times are 0830 & 1600. During winter the system is blown out and not in operation. You will need to download the Tempus DC app on your phone in order to manually turn on the sprinklers before you ride if the arena is dusty. One sprinkler runs at a time.

Running the manual program:

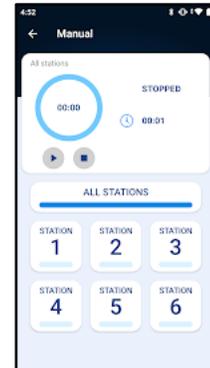
Step 1 Open the Tempus DC app



Step 2 Select Manual



Step 16 All Stations will be selected. Press play



Step 4 One sprinkler operates at a time. You may start riding on the wet area once the first sprinkler finishes.

Invasive Species Mitigation

Manually pulling weeds takes many hours of volunteer time. Round up has been used in the past during peak growing season, once Kearns Creek dried up in an effort to help with invasive species removal. This has caused some concern from neighboring residents. Other options are using a torch during the open burning season – October 15 through April 15 – each year. If round up is to be used, a viable option would be to line the creek side with filter cloth as an additional barrier. The British Columbia government says we need to spray 10m away from a water body and that additional measurements could be a filter cloth along the edge of creeks when water is present. If the arena is used heavily, the weeds will not have a chance to grow.

Puncture Vine (*Tribulus terrestris*)



Figure 17 Puncture Vine

Stiff spines on the fruit readily attach to footwear, clothing, animals, tires, machinery and supplies. They can injure the feet, hides, mouths, eyes, and digestive tracts of livestock. The spines can also injure people.

Hand removal or hoeing is effective for controlling small outbreaks.

Chemical control is also an option. Recent research conducted in the South Okanagan has indicated that pre-emergent herbicides including Chateau, Prism and Sandea provide season-long suppression of puncturevine. Refer to the label for crops that these herbicides can be used on. Post-emergent herbicides including Clearview and Overdrive also showed control of puncturevine throughout the growing season, but can only be applied in non-cropland sites.

Longspine Sand Burr (*Cenchrus longispinus*)

Spines on the seeds readily attach to footwear, clothing, animals, tires, machinery and supplies. The spines can injure the feet, hides, mouths, eyes and digestive tracts of livestock, and can also injure people.

Hand removal or hoeing is effective for controlling small outbreaks.

If seeds are present, removed plants must be bagged and disposed of at the landfill.

Chemical control is also an option.



Figure 18 Sand burr