The Rayonier Precedent: Wildlight & the East Nassau Stewardship District

Background research · Westward Expansion investigation · August 5, 2026

Purpose. At the August 4, 2026 Palm Coast City Council meeting, Raydient/Rayonier's team repeatedly pointed to their own Nassau County community as the working model for a westward-expansion stewardship district. This brief identifies that development, its governing district, its litigation history, and what dollar figures for resident cost are currently confirmable. It is a reference document, not a finished story.

The Development

Wildlight — an unincorporated community near Yulee, Nassau County, FL, within the ~24,000-acre East Nassau Community Planning Area (ENCPA). Wildlight's Central Planning Area itself covers approximately 2,900 acres. Developer: **Raydient Places + Properties**, a Rayonier subsidiary.

> **Confirmed:** the westward expansion applicant is Raydient Palm Coast LLC (not "Radiant," a mishearing that entered this outlet's own meeting transcript and, in an earlier draft, this brief). The signed MPD development agreement itself names the landowner "RAYDIENT PALM COAST LLC, a Delaware limited liability company" at "One Rayonier Way" — the same corporate address format used for Wildlight's developer, Raydient Places + Properties LLC. Same corporate family, confirmed directly from the primary legal document (library/docs/raydient-mpd-agreement-2026-08-04-revised-text.txt), not a naming coincidence.

The Governing District

The **East Nassau Stewardship District (ENSD)** was created by Chapter 2017-206, Laws of Florida — a special act signed by Gov. Rick Scott on June 6, 2017 — and is governed alongside Chapter 189, Fla. Stat. Official records (budgets, minutes, assessment resolutions) are published at eastnassausd.net.

Litigation History

In 2018, Raydient/Rayonier entities sued Nassau County (six counts) alleging the county was attempting to make Raydient, or the stewardship district itself, pay for county-wide park construction and maintenance as a condition of developing Wildlight — which Raydient said was never part of the original land-use agreement for the project.

A Fourth Judicial Circuit ruling, reported in April 2024, found that creating the stewardship district did **not** relieve Nassau County of its own service obligations for parks under the county's Comprehensive Plan — i.e., the district's existence does not automatically shift that cost off the county's books.

> **Unresolved in current sourcing:** multiple secondary sources report a settlement in February 2023 — before the April 2024 ruling reported above. This timeline is internally inconsistent across the sources found so far and needs to be reconciled against the actual Nassau County circuit court docket before citing a sequence of events in any story or filing.

This dispute is directly relevant to Palm Coast's own open question: *what-changed.php* already established that the westward expansion MPD defers water, sewer, and road agreements to future negotiations. The Wildlight case shows this exact category of dispute — who is actually on the hook when a stewardship district exists alongside a host government's own service obligations — playing out in litigation elsewhere.

Financial Structure

- **$600 million** bond validation authorization for Wildlight's Central Planning Area — an engineer's opinion of probable infrastructure costs (roadways, utilities, parks/recreation) over a 25-year buildout. This is a cost estimate and financing ceiling, not a guarantee of what gets built or spent.
- Bonds are special-assessment revenue bonds secured **solely** by assessments on landowners within the district — explicitly not a debt, liability, or obligation of Nassau County or the State of Florida.
- Only landowners within the ENSD/ENCPA boundary pay its assessments; Nassau County residents outside the district do not.

What Residents Actually Pay — Confirmed Current Figures

Two *separate* funding streams exist and should not be conflated in any story: the ENSD district assessment (a public special-district tax, appears on the county tax bill), and Wildlight's private HOA dues (administered by Wildlight LLC / the Florida Lowcountry Foundation, unrelated to the district). The table below is the district assessment only, sourced directly to ENSD's own FY2026 Adopted Budget (eastnassausd.net), combining the general fund (GF), special revenue/O&M fund (SRF), and debt service (DS) portions into the total each on-roll household actually pays.

Lot Type (Wildlight Village Ph. 1)	FY2026 Total/yr	FY2025 Total/yr	Change
SF 30' lot	$896.08	$871.76	+2.8%
SF 45' lot	$1,318.86	$1,281.17	+2.9%
SF 55' lot	$1,587.42	$1,542.77	+2.9%
SF 70' lot	$2,021.06	$1,961.44	+3.0%
Apartment unit	$195.49	$176.52	+10.7%

Source: East Nassau Stewardship District, Fiscal Year 2026 Adopted Budget, “Assessment Comparison — Projected Fiscal Year 2026 Assessments,” on-roll table for Wildlight Village Phase 1 (Series 2018 Bonds), eastnassausd.net/_assets/documents/fy-2026/2026-ENSD-budget.pdf. Later phases (2021 and 2024 bond series) carry different, generally higher per-unit totals as newer debt service layers in — e.g. a 65' lot in Phase 2A runs $1,806.76/yr under the Series 2021 assessment table in the same document. Figures rise on a fixed amortization schedule regardless of the home's market value; the Series 2018 bond schedule alone runs through 2049.

Affordability Context — Facts Only, No Conclusion Drawn

Wildlight's own median home price recently ran **$408,000–$469,000**, with new construction starting around $349,900 (May/June 2026 MLS data). This is not marketed or priced as entry-level housing; the $75–$170/month assessment above stacks onto an already mid-to-upper-range mortgage payment, not a starter-home price point.

> **What would be needed to responsibly assess affordability impact** — not done in this brief: area median income for the relevant market, a full stacked monthly cost calculation (mortgage + property tax + homeowner's insurance + HOA dues + this assessment), and whether Palm Coast's own MPD is expected to include comparable price points or a different, lower-cost product mix than Wildlight's. Absent that analysis, this brief does not conclude whether the framework produces unaffordable housing — it documents the mechanism and the confirmed dollar figures only.
