

## [Orkin Files Federal Lawsuit to Void Settlement with Wildwood Condo Association](#)

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OCALA - Pest-control giant Orkin has filed a federal lawsuit aimed at escaping a recent legal settlement that would require the company to pay an estimated \$6 million to repair a termite-ravage condominium complex in Sumter County.

The Atlanta-based company ([www.orkin.com](http://www.orkin.com)) contends that it agreed only to pay \$815,000 to the Sandalwood Condominium Association at Wildwood to settle an eight-year-old, breach-of-duty, court battle.

"They're trying to weasel out of the deal," said Peter M. Cardillo, known as the "bug lawyer" who represents tenants and owner of the 104-unit residential community located near the intersection of State Road 44 and County Road 468. "It's another broken promise from them (and) typical - even when we have it in writing."

Orkin spokeswoman Martha Craft would not comment, citing the company action filed in federal court in Ocala this week. She had previously confirmed that the company and the condo association had reached a settlement.

According to the court filing, Orkin's Orlando-based lawyers tried to withdraw a settlement offer on Sept. 26, 2008, but Cardillo said his clients had already accepted. Cardillo's Tampa-based practice specializes in civil claims against pest-control companies.

The condominium association contends Orkin agreed to pay the repair costs for "hidden damage" at the complex which could exceed \$6 million, according to Roy Kerns, an engineer hired by Sandalwood as its expert.

He supervised the repair of one of Sandalwood's buildings and costs exceeded \$700,000, including Kerns' \$100,000 administration fee, according to Orkin's federal lawsuit. The company called his estimate "outlandish" and challenged his method of examining and repairing subterranean termite damage at the complex.

The condominium association's lawsuit in Sumter County had been pending for eight years and was scheduled to begin Nov. 10 when the settlement was announced. The judge had set aside three weeks for the trial and had given the "bug lawyer" permission to seek punitive damages from Orkin for "false advertising."

Orkin was hired through its now-defunct Leesburg office in 1984 to treat the condo buildings and clubhouse. The company no longer has an office in Leesburg and could not find files to document its work.

Cardillo claims the company either treated the buildings improperly or not at all.