

From the **MEDITERRA NORTH AND SOUTH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS**

August 2011

**DEAR RESIDENT**

Hello again, we hope you are enjoying the summer. We want to take a moment to update you on CDD business.

**THE ANNUAL BUDGET**

It is the time of year when the CDDs (South—Collier County; North—Lee County), as governmental agencies, must go through deliberations and adopt an annual budget. The CDDs operate on a Fiscal Year which begins October 1st and concludes on September 30<sup>th</sup> of the following year. As discussed previously, the CDDs collect their revenues through a non ad valorem assessment that is a part of your annual county property tax bill. In other words, when you pay your annual property tax bill, you are also paying your annual CDD assessment. For the upcoming Fiscal Year, the CDDs are proposing increased funding of their beneficial aquatic plant program by \$50,000. The revenue to offset this increase in appropriations will come from the use of a portion of CDD Fund Balance Surpluses and thus will not result in an increase in assessments to the residents. Actually, there is a proposed decrease in the total CDD assessment level 10%, for the upcoming Fiscal Year, as a result of cost savings being realized in other areas of the budget and the use of surplus fund balance. The CDDs will be holding their Public Hearings to adopt their annual budgets on August 17<sup>th</sup>.

**WHAT DOES THE INCREASE IN APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE BENEFICIAL AQUATIC PLANT PROGRAM MEAN?**

As you may recall, we elaborated on the advantages of the beneficial aquatic plant program in our November 2010 newsletter. In summary, the CDDs currently utilize two means of protecting the lake banks from erosion, installation of pine straw mulch and the use of beneficial aquatic plants. The mulch is seen as an effective yet short term approach as it will deteriorate and must be replaced annually. The aquatic plants are seen as the long term answer, but take time, once planted, to get established, mature, and fill in to the desired densities in order to provide true erosion control benefits. Over time as the beneficial aquatic plant population's increase, the amount/need for pine straw mulch will decrease, thus reducing annual operating costs. It is anticipated, that by more aggressively funding the beneficial aquatic plant program, the CDDs will begin realizing significant reductions in appropriations for these two programs within the next 1-2 years.

**OTHER TID-BITS**

At their last meetings, both CDDs discussed the potential of developing a nature trail system within their wetlands. The very preliminary concept proposed was to consider a nature trail system within the wetland area surrounded by Mediterra Circle that would be a combination of a ground level path and raised boardwalk. The South CDD Board authorized having the District's engineer, Johnson Engineering, review the existing agency permits to determine if there is any language within the permits that would outright preclude the development of a nature trail system. The review concluded that a properly designed trail system may be permissible. The Districts are expected to continue their discussion of this potential project at their upcoming meetings. Currently, we are researching if State and/or Federal funds are available for this project.

The CDDs have also been selectively removing a beneficial plant, within certain lakes, called "bullrush". Though bullrush is a beneficial plant it can grow to be very tall (6-8 feet) and as a result has a tendency to create

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issues with blocking views, golf course playability and can be difficult to manage/maintain free of nuisance weeds and pests. As the bulrush is removed it has been replaced with lower growing varieties of beneficial plants such as spikerush, pickerelweed and arrowhead.

Additionally, the CDDs have begun a program of testing the water quality within certain community lakes. The tests are being performed on a quarterly basis for an initial one year period and will be testing certain parameters that have a direct relationship on basic water body health. The lakes were strategically chosen and include lakes that are at the beginning of the system (where water enters into the Mediterra property from adjacent communities/roadway systems), lakes that are at the end of the system (just before the water leaves Mediterra) and a few select lakes in between. This sampling will help us to identify the quality of the water as it enters, passes through and exits the Mediterra system and any negative/positive affects the Mediterra storm water system may be having on the storm water quality.

Finally, as the rainy season gets into full swing and the lake levels begin to rise, we want to take this opportunity to remind you that the main feature of our storm water system is our community lakes. These lakes, of which there are 79, are constructed to specifically hold a certain amount of rain runoff. During rainy season or a major storm, you will see the lakes not only rising vertically but also spreading out horizontally, moving up onto lawns and closer to the edge of lanais. **This is to be expected**, particularly during rainy season, and has been built into the system's design. Designing the flow of the water through the community was based upon the ability to handle a three-day storm event that could potentially produce 11 inches of rain. The U.S. Weather Bureau says such an event would occur only once, on average, every 25 years. Overall, the system has endured some record rain levels over the years and no severe flooding has occurred. The CDD continues to maintain it and monitor it, ensuring that it continues to operate at an optimum level.

**WE CONTINUE TO NEED YOUR HELP.**

As indicated above, and in the previous newsletter, the CDDs are spending a portion of your annual assessment monies on the aquatic plant program. Please help us in insuring the success of this program by not removing, mowing or spraying these plants. Additionally please be sure to contact us if you observe anyone else damaging or destroying the aquatic plants.

For more information regarding the CDDs or to report a concern with a lake or wetland, please contact the District Manager's office at (239) 498-9020.