

## *Tesoro CDD Note:* *Quarter 3, 2025*

### **Introduction**

As we approach Fall, not that it has yet got really cold, it has been an interesting summer. Once again, the rains came at different times from previous years, and our learning with lake plantings has paid a lot of dividends. Projects have continued apace.

### **Plantings**

The lake planting took place much later this year as the plant growers struggled to bring their plants to maturity. We also planted in clumps rather than in straight rows and the result has been a significantly higher plant survival. As an example, we have done plantings in the lake at hole #8 (along Caldo Rd) over 2 years. This lake had virtually no plants on its edges at all, and it now has sufficient plants to look pretty and we are able to allow them to grow on their own for the future.

By and large the lakes where there are homes now have a good coverage of plants, although the program will continue to get the density and diversity into all the lakes. We will see what the recent rains which have filled the lakes to the high-water level will do to the plants, but so far so good.

### **Projects**

The Tesoro permits require the preservation of the area as well as the removal of the Invasive species (often Brazilian Pepper and, where there is water, the invasive Willows). There is also a requirement to ensure water flows in a controlled manner when there is heavy rain. What is and is not allowed in the permits is why we employ Ronnie Howell and his Native Lands team, as they have the knowledge and perform this onerous work to high level of credibility.

Phases 1 to 3 (see below) of the maintenance of the Hole #10 T-box to the Hole #18 T-boxes were completed in the last quarter, but this area is now starting to look really good with healthy growth at all levels returning.

We have also opened up the formerly unknown waterway that flows from the lake along Caldo Rd to the north to allow water and into the preserve areas on the way to the St Lucie River. We have only completed phase 1 of this work, and we will continue the remaining phases in the next 2 quarters. Hole #8 drainage may well improve, and this will hopefully become a lovely little water area between Caldo Rd and the golf course for the future homes along the road.

The 2 retention ponds along Calmo Rd to the west side will be repaired in the December / January period. These need to perform the function of taking all the water from the homes and lots that preferentially flows to the street, and then into drains and into these retention areas. The areas are designed to fill up and then overflow slowly into the preserve area. No maintenance has been done since these were created, so work to bring them to the design standard is required.

### **Phases of maintenance**

While we have mentioned these, it is worth explaining them as we work on the really overgrown areas that have had over 20 years of unchecked growth. I will put them into phases just for ease of sequencing:

***Phase #1:***

The removal of invasive vines, trees, shrubs and plants which we are required to do under our permits. Unfortunately, these are not nicely spaced but grew randomly so the work often leaves different densities of trees and shrubs along the area after this phase is complete. The vines that are prevalent in the dense bush are cut as high above ground as is practical and we allow the remaining lengths in the taller trees to wither and die.

***Phase #2:***

Inevitably the added sunshine and airflow that the opening up work creates, then allows the secondary growth to suddenly erupt and flourish. We need to allow this growth a period before we start to try and trim and make the area look neat and tidy. We will spray weeds to try to stop them taking over the area during this period.

***Phase #3:***

The lower growth is now established, and the Native Lands team can trim and shape as appropriate to the type of tree or bush (limited by the permit) and start to bring this area into a neater and more ordered shape. Weeds and unwanted growth are inhibited, and mulch (from phase #1 mainly) is spread to minimize the weed growth at the ground level.

***Phase #4:***

The team trims and finishes the area to its finished look with weeds under control (as much as can be achieved in Florida) and this is handed to the maintenance team for regular trimming and thinning during the year.

To put this into perspective, here are the Phase #1, Phase #2 and #3 (sorry, do not have an appropriate photo to differentiate phases #2 and 3), and Phase #4 for the wetland that sits to the west of Via San Marino and the berm along Southbend. Blvd. This was a wetland that no one knew about other than by going back on Google Earth to see when Tesoro was created.



The lesson is really that it takes months if not closer to a year to cut out the jungle, allow the appropriate plants to grow and then to trim and make the area look beautiful. We have never had to add trees to give an area an improvement, but obviously that is an option as we move through

the community. There are significant areas still to be addressed on the north and east side (northern half), so these projects are going to be done over some years.

## **Financial Year**

The budget for the CDD is from October to September. As there is strong government oversight on the operation of any CDD, each year there is a detailed financial audit for the operations and expenditures. These are all shown on the Tesoro CDD website.

In 2009 the tax paid by every Home and Lot owner was nominally \$311 per year. During the years Mr Straub owned the property this was reduced to around \$44 per year. The \$311 was reinstated when the CDD started to do projects to improve and to do regular maintenance of the areas. It should be of interest that the \$311 in 2009 would be around \$470 today. The CDD has managed to improve the areas significantly and to perform the regular maintenance required to maintain the beautiful areas at a much lower cost than was envisaged in 2009.

## **Retaining Structure A-25 (near Rio Caserano and Via Tesoro)**

This structure is deteriorating after decades of service. It holds the water in the Mitigation area that extends from our eastern border under Via Tesoro then into a loop to end at the weir wall (structure A-25) just before Via Tesoro. We started nearly 4 years ago and established that this was the responsibility of the City of Port St Lucie. The City is apparently finishing the design of a new structure after core samples were done earlier this year. We are trying to ensure the City does have this scheduled for the 2026 budget and does issue the contract for the building as soon as possible as failure of this would be loss of all the water in the retention pond.

## **CDD Board of Supervisors**

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