

September 18, 2017

Dear Fellow Saddle Creek Residents,

I've attended all of the Saddle Creek Community Services District (CSD) meetings over the past six months and offer this letter to share what I've learned.

For those that are relatively new to Saddle Creek, or would benefit from an overview, the Saddle Creek Home Owners Association (HOA) web site includes a document called "Saddle Creek Resort Insights" which provides general information about the community, including CSD, HOA, and Resort (Castle & Cooke) responsibilities. It was written in October 2012, and would benefit from some updates, but you may find it worthwhile to read. Please click on the link below to access the document:

http://www.saddlecreekhoa.info/uploads/Saddle_Creek_Resort_Insights_10-9-12.pdf

CSD Organization

The CSD Board consists of five elected members, each of whom are residents of Saddle Creek:

- Larry Hoffman, President
- Ken Albertson, Director
- Darlene DeBaldo, Director
- Roger Golden, Director
- Sue Russ, Director

The board is supported by:

- Pete Kampa, General Manager, pkampa@kampacs.com
- Nicole McCutchen, Board Clerk
- Greg Hebard, Site Manager, sccsd@caltel.com, 209-768-5678
- Ralph McGeorge, Superintendent, sccsdmsuper@caltel.com

CSD's workforce (employees that perform the CSD services described in this letter) normally consists of a staff of five, including Greg Hebard and Ralph McGeorge. They are currently two employees short.

CSD Website

CSD maintains a website, accessible through the Home Page of the Saddle Creek Resort website or by clicking here:

<https://saddlecreekcsd.org/>

By visiting this website, you may view information about each planned and completed CSD board meeting, current CSD activities, finances, and other topics. You may also sign up to be notified by email of any new postings to the website.

CSD Services, Current Status, and Project Planning

- **Road maintenance**

Although CSD is responsible to maintain the quality of the streets within the Saddle Creek Special District, they have never had the funds to do so.

The original plan for the community would have built out all of the 1,163 lots by the year 2008, and the special assessment revenue from property taxes would have been sufficient to cover all anticipated CSD responsibilities, including street maintenance. To date, only 560 lots have been improved, resulting in a shortfall in special assessment revenue. Because of the passage of Measure A in early May, additional CSD funding will become available with the coming property tax season.

At the August 15 CSD board meeting, CSD announced they had distributed a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a road improvement and maintenance services contract. The board agreed to award the contract to Willdan Engineering, a highly regarded firm that has carefully inspected all of our streets, demonstrated a good understanding of our needs, and offered a competitive rate structure. Condor Earth will be Willdan Engineering's subcontractor for geo-tech road boring services.

Willdan Engineering will develop a plan of action for consideration by the CSD Board of Directors. CSD is prepared to consider performing road repairs on the most seriously damaged street segments as a single, large project or in small pieces. If it is advantageous to perform the work as a single, large project, CSD would need to obtain a loan and use Measure A funds to pay off the loan over time. The design engineering is expected to be completed this fall and winter, so that contractor bids can be received next spring and construction started soon thereafter.

- **Storm drain maintenance**

CSD routinely inspects the storm drains throughout the year. Clogged drains lead to foul odors as was recently the case in the Rock Ridge area.

Residents can assure prompt CSD action to storm drain problems by reporting foul odors to Greg Hebard at 209-768-5678.

- **Entrance gate control**

CSD is responsible for keeping the front gate and the adjacent building in good working order. CSD also assists residents that need help with remote devices to open the gate.

CSD notified Castle & Cooke about resident requests to replace signage (particularly outside the gate) that have been damaged or otherwise deemed unsightly. Castle & Cooke said they will take care of it, but did not say when.

- **Street lighting**

CSD is responsible to keep the street lights burning. CSD has also received resident requests to repaint the light poles and they plan to do so, though the work has not been scheduled.

The poles cannot simply be spray painted. Over the coming year, CSD will develop detailed plans to address non-routine types of maintenance, to be paid from reserves. CSD will seek recommendations from the street light manufacturer on procedures to restore the coating to original condition, which may involve removal, blasting, and recoating with epoxy.

- **Mosquito control**

The persistently hot summer seems to have killed off our local mosquito population, thus CSD discontinued the Thursday evening fogging routine. However, CSD continues to inspect the pond and other areas where mosquito eggs may be in place and dormant. As they find these areas, they apply larvicides.

- **Weed control and trail/fire fuel break maintenance**

This CSD activity is seasonal. When the rainy season ends and the native grasses die, this becomes CSD's highest priority. They first mow large fire breaks to protect the community at large, then string-trim the tall weeds in natural habitat areas around the homes. Quail Trail is cleaned up after the other areas are complete. CSD considers this work completed for the year, but if any resident is concerned about areas they believe need more work, please contact Greg Hebard at 209-768-5678.

Individual residents whose properties include areas of natural habitat are welcome to string-trim their own land, if they prefer, and may do so as needed throughout the year. Property owners are not permitted to apply Roundup on the natural habitat or to string-trim so low that the ground is left with bare dirt. After trimming, the area should have very short live or dead grass to preserve a fire-safe natural habitat as proscribed by the Army Corps of Engineers.

- **Monitoring of wildlife and wetlands easements**

CSD routinely inspects all of the ponds and wildlife habitats to ensure compliance with Army Corps of Engineers mandates. CSD and the golf course maintenance staff make joint decisions to trim cattails and other foliage to maintain an attractive appearance while ensuring nesting grounds are not damaged or destroyed.

- **Common area landscape maintenance**

Understandably, many residents have questioned why the landscaping from Little John Road (outside the gate) to and through the roundabout has not been repaired and/or replaced once the water restrictions were lifted by the water district. And residents have no doubt noticed that a strip of land near the roundabout had been reseeded, but was inundated with seeds from native grasses and has recently been treated a second time with Roundup. The golf course has also been

inundated with undesirable grasses, especially crabgrass, nutgrass and knotgrass. Heavy doses of pre-emergent were applied by CSD and by the golf course maintenance staff, but it has not been effective this year (presumably because of the persistently high temperatures this summer).

Measure A included an initiative to convert CSD properties to drought-tolerant landscaping. Now that Measure A has been approved, CSD will plan the design and implementation, but will not perform the actual conversion until the CSD Board determines that the majority of residents are in favor of it.

When Measure A was approved, CSD appointed an ad hoc committee, consisting of residents from throughout the community to establish a design for drought-tolerant landscaping, with the first phase to address the area from Little John Road to and through the roundabout. The committee has been formed and is led by Lora Warner and includes Carolyn Stinemates, Don Conners, Nancy Dare, Sharon Burns, Eva Gress, Linda Petty, Debbie Naples, Ken Albertson and Sue Russ. Ken and Sue are also members of the CSD Board. The ad hoc committee will seek opinions from other residents and will work with an established landscape architecture firm. The CSD General Manager and the ad hoc committee have begun the process of interviewing four competing landscape architect firms. When a firm is selected, a landscaping plan will be drawn up and will be presented to the board for approval.

This process will determine the timeline for implementation, and quantify the cost and anticipated benefits so that the community can make an informed decision. Anticipated benefits include substantial reductions to annual maintenance and water consumption expenses, minimized impacts from future drought conditions, and improved, consistent aesthetics throughout the community.

CSD views the drought-tolerant landscaping to be the long-term solution and recognizes the urgent need for a short-term solution as well. CSD installed topsoil and grass seed in areas between the front gate and the roundabout with disappointing results. Installation of sod would immediately beautify the area, but would require a very substantial investment.

CSD defines the short-term project as the work to restore the drought damaged areas of the community landscaping to a condition of aesthetic acceptability, completed with minimal capital investment during fall 2017; while the longer-term option of a larger scale drought tolerant landscape conversion can be identified, its feasibility determined, planned and implemented. The overall goal of the short-term project is to increase aesthetics while minimizing investments in work that may be later removed to implement the long-term solution.

For the short-term project, CSD expects to budget up to \$100,000 to -

- Contract and seek advice and guidance from a landscape architect hired by CSD for the completion of the short-term project
- Contract for removal of dead turf as needed. No additional turf is to be reinstalled.
- Purchase and install landscape bark in dirt areas where turf was removed

- Install and/or contract for minimal “fill in” hardscape in areas initially identified as suitable for permanent hardscape items as determined appropriate, within funding available and under advisement of the landscape architect

I will distribute updated information as the road maintenance and landscaping project plans mature, and as I obtain schedules for smaller projects, such as signage replacement and light pole repainting.

Let me know of any questions or concerns, I'll try to answer them. Also notify me if you do not wish to receive additional or updated CSD information from me in the future.

Please don't “reply all”.

Most Respectfully,
Dave Ehlers
pdehlers@caltel.com