



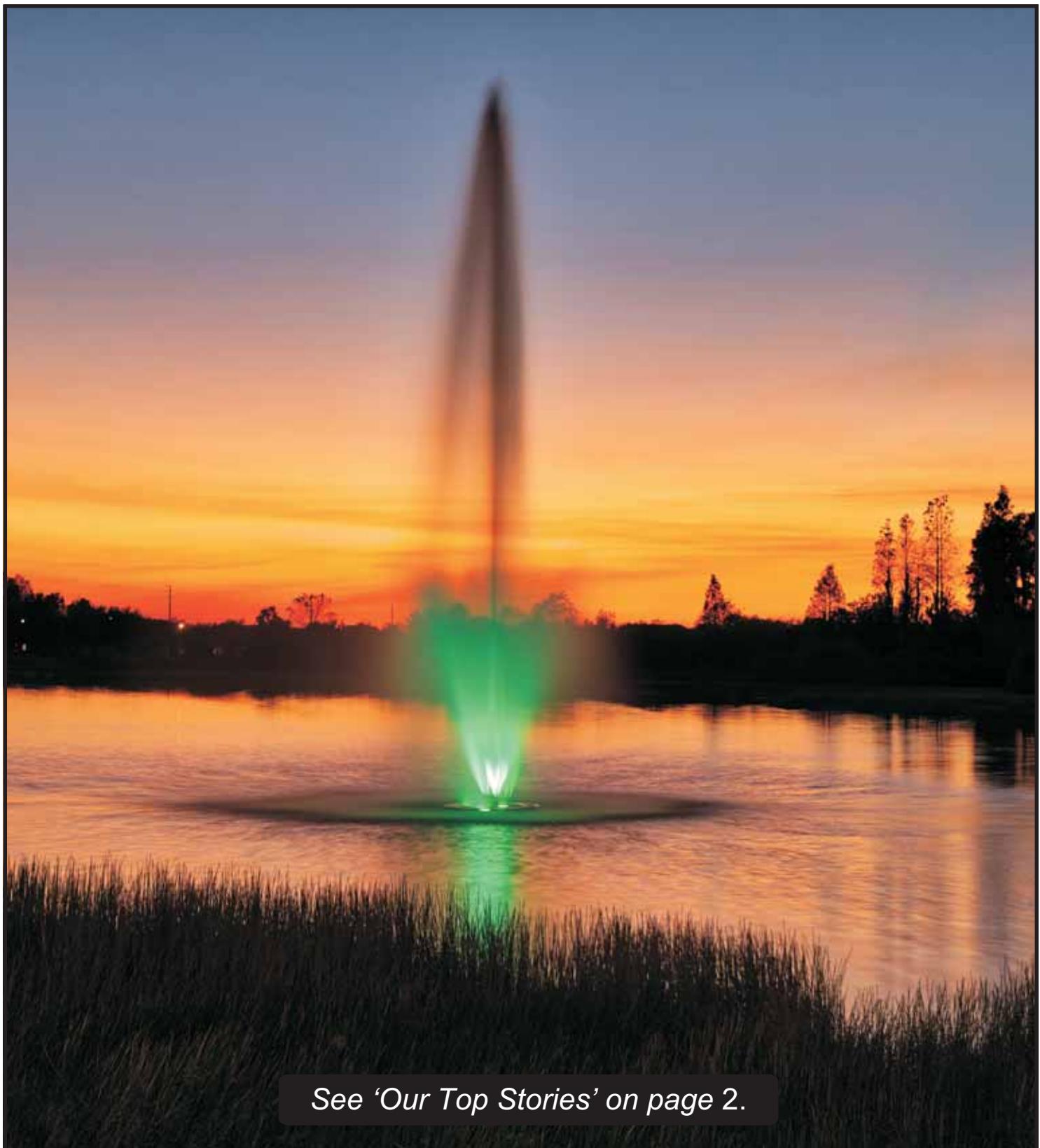
The Ballantrae Communicator

The newsletter of the Ballantrae community boards in Land O' Lakes, FL

Spring 2019

16 pages

Vol. 11, No. 4



See 'Our Top Stories' on page 2.

Residents can attend, be heard at upcoming meetings ...

... CDD Board changes meeting date schedule

The CDD Board of Supervisors will now hold most of its regular monthly meetings each year on the fourth Wednesdays of the month, beginning March 27.

Remaining fourth Wednesday meetings this fiscal year are: March 27, April 24, May 22, June 26, July 24, Aug. 28 and Sept. 25.

All meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. at the clubhouse.

Residents are invited to comment on agenda items at the start of the meeting. Any CDD non-agenda items can be brought up after all agenda items have been discussed.

The evening meetings are designed to maximize the number of people who can attend and participate in the Board's meetings year-round. Only four nighttime CDD meetings a year are required under Florida law.

CDD meeting dates are also posted online at the CDD's website at ballantraecdd.org, at the Board Meetings tab, on the bulletin board at the clubhouse and in all six village entrance bulletin boards.

All meeting agendas and approved minutes are posted to the CDD website in advance of each meeting. 

... of Ballantrae's master HOA Board ...

The Ballantrae HOA Board of Directors will continue to hold its meetings on the second Tuesdays of the month, starting at 7 p.m. at the clubhouse.

Dates are Mar. 12, Apr. 9, May 14, June 11, July 9, no meeting in Aug., Sept. 10, Oct. 8, Nov. 12 and Dec. 10.

HOA members are always invited to attend and participate. To contact the HOA Board, go to ballantraehoa.com or "Ballantrae HOA" on Facebook. 

Our top stories

An update on projects recently completed by the CDD: Page 3.

Ballantrae benefits as Duke Energy expands to serve new area construction: Page 4.

CDD completes the first phase of a Ballantrae "face lift" by painting community walls and structures: Page 5.

Pasco County is in the midst of repairing stormwater system in Lintower: Page 6.

CDD invites resident comments on spending and savings in 2019-20 budget: Page 7.

CDD completes the second "face lift" phase with a cleanup of wetlands buffer zone: Page 10.

Here are the procedures for any resident needing an ID card to access gated CDD amenities: Page 12.

Home sales list the most recent transactions for property transfers in Ballantrae: Page 14.

The next community garage sale in Ballantrae is scheduled for April 13: Page 14.

Here's some useful information that makes living in Ballantrae just a bit easier: Page 15.

On the cover

Nighttime lighting in Ballantrae's two entrance ponds provides a picturesque drive across the entry causeway. This is the west side pond and fountain.

... and the Straiton townhomes HOA Board

The Straiton HOA Board of Directors has bimonthly meetings set for April 10, June 13, Aug. 14 and Oct. 9.

Meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. at the clubhouse.

All Straiton HOA members are invited to attend and participate.

The Straiton HOA Board can be reached via email at straitonhoa@gmail.com.

Its homepage is straitontownhomes.com. 

The Ballantrae Communicator

The Ballantrae Communicator is published quarterly by the Ballantrae Community Development District Board of Supervisors, with occasional contributions from the board of directors of the Ballantrae Homeowner Association and the Straiton Townhomes Homeowner Association.

Members of all organizations are welcome to suggest story ideas. Email them to the editor at jfplateau@ballantraecdd.org.

Send all email to *The Communicator* to the editor or via "snail mail" to the editor at the clubhouse at 17611 Mentmore Blvd. in Land O' Lakes, FL 34638.

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Updates on a few CDD projects

Here are updates on three recent projects undertaken by the CDD Board:

- Shown above is the stormwater structure at the south end of Ayrshire Blvd. that required renovation by BIOMASS at a cost of \$14,000. The unit prevents flooding on Ayrshire Blvd. and Cunningham Court plus the homes along them. Stormwater flowing from the neighboring LeDantec Acres property contributed to underground water pressure that damaged the structure surface. Surface water flow also scoured [the outside of the structure](#), damaging the sides of it. It is expected that, when LeDantec develops the property, it will pay for piping into the side of this structure to better control stormwater flow. Water from this structure flows through a pipe under Ayrshire Blvd. into the east entrance pond.
- Photo at right shows a worker using a mini-auger to speed up digging holes as he plants flowers at the main entrance. The work is part of a \$3,469 quarterly contract to replace some flowers at the main and six village entrances. That pales in comparison to a \$156,192 overhaul the Board has approved to replace all of the 15-year old landscaping, sod, mulch and much of the aging irrigation system at the main entrance and medians, six village entrances and the park. The work will be performed in late spring by Yellowstone Landscape. It is the third and last part of a Ballantrae “face lift” by the CDD Board, along with the painting project described on page 5 and the wetland cleanup detailed on page 10.
- Photo below shows the addition of speed bumps in the clubhouse parking lot, following complaints about excessive speed in an area shared by children and motorists. A second speed bump was placed in the far end of the lot just behind the truck visible in the background. The split in the speed bump allows rainwater to reach the storm drain. The project by ACPLM cost \$3,814. 





Duke expands Ballantrae power, backup

Duke Energy subcontractor Infratech Corp. of New Port Richey says it is “probably two months from finishing” a major service upgrade that will increase the amount and emergency load available in Ballantrae.

That makes Ballantrae a major beneficiary of power upgrades and new service needed by Duke Energy to serve our current and future neighbors.

The work along Ballantrae Blvd. from SR 54 to Tower Road will provide power to northern construction, such as the housing and school in Bexley.

The offshoot from Ballantrae Blvd. east along Mentmore Blvd. will power-up construction occurring in Concord Station and elsewhere to the east.

The construction near our entrance tower included tunneling under SR 54 to the south. The transmission line will extend to the substation 2 miles to the east.

If additional power is needed in the Bexley area, Infratech believes it can be provided from the equipment now being installed at Tower Road.

This is not the first time Duke construction has expanded service to others from Ballantrae. Two years ago, the CDD Board allowed it to run a line across CDD property on the east side of Ballantrae Blvd. for the Bexley school.

Photos, clockwise from top left, show projects by Duke vendor Infratech that include the install of cabling at the front entrance to run south under SR 54 to a substation to the east; interlink conduit along Mentmore Blvd. for directional boring that when buried will carry power lines; a switch gear collar in front of the day care for a transformer and a pool box on Ballantrae Blvd. that will house feeder cable.





Clockwise from top left, photos show CertaPro team painting the entrance tower; painting the inside of a privacy wall; repairs to one of the post caps between sections of wall; the attention to detail that included repainting of the flower pots at the main entrance, and the removal of all clinging vines before walls were repaired and repainted.

CDD completes repainting

The first phase of the Ballantrae CDD's plan to give the community a "face lift" was completed in January when CertaPro finished the \$95,624 repainting of both sides of 7,700 linear feet of community-owned privacy walls as well as the CDD's clubhouse, main and six village entrance monuments, two gazebos, and other structures.

Besides the repainting, the project included repairing broken caps along the wall. Surfaces were power washed to remove dirt, mildew and loose paint so new coats would adhere properly.

Needed primer coats were applied to masonry and metal surfaces. All surfaces got a conditioner coating, a second coating designed to bond with the paint and then a third coating of paint the same color as the original. 

Thanks to all!
For removing
property near
walls that allowed
the inside of all
privacy walls to
be painted!



Pasco lowers pond level to fix Lintower stormwater system

The Pasco County Public Works Department will use a stent-like process in April when it returns to Lintower to repair a problem in its underground stormwater system.

That problem caused a 10x4-foot depression of several inches in depth along Sandgate Court in front of two homes.

Identifying the cause and solution in February required the temporary lowering of the water level in the pond on Mentmore Blvd. behind those homes west of the clubhouse.

Public Works manager Floyd "Bud" Wilson said getting to the source of the problem was a simple matter of hydraulics:

- The problem is 10 feet underground at the base of a street drain catch basin.
- That's several feet below the water table that rises to a few feet below the surface – far higher than normal for this time of year.
- Accessing the problem area required lowering the pond level below the suspect pipe invert level to expose the work site.

That, county officials say, is more complicated than it sounds.

They began draining the pond about Feb. 12. A week later, the water level at the street drain had fallen sufficiently for workers to access the underground site and begin identifying the problem and a solution.

Ten feet down the vertical basin unit, a 36-inch pipe enters through the side of the catch basin. That pipe carries stormwater south between homes and back into the pond.

Where the pipe enters the catch basin, sealant around the outside of the pipe is supposed to prevent outside water and any debris from entering the basin or pipe.

In this case, the sealant is nonexistent. That has allowed groundwater to enter the catch basin and pipe, carrying sand along with it.

The water scouring of sand outside the pipe has also undermined the roadway above it, causing it to sink.

As officials used a vacuum truck to pump soil and muck from within the catch basin, the vehicle's weight led to more shifting of sand. The street sank even more beneath the vehicle, causing more surface damage.

Continued on page 7



Top photo shows pump at left powering hoses to move water from pond to wetlands in background. At right, vacuum removes water, sand and muck from base of street stormwater drain in front of homes. Photo below shows wheeled camera that rolls through pipes and shows activity, such as water turbulence below bottom.



CDD Board seeks resident input on 2019-20 spending

As spring approaches, it's again time for the CDD Board to ask residents to share their ideas on spending and savings for the 2019-20 budget year that begins Oct. 1.

The Board is required to adopt a balanced preliminary budget by the end of June. It must then hold a public hearing and adopt a final balanced budget by the end of August.

As noted on page 2, the Board has changed its meetings to the fourth Wednesday of each month.

That means residents are welcome to present their ideas at fourth Wednesday meetings scheduled for March 27, April 24 and May 22, when the Board is expected to vote on the preliminary budget. A public hearing and then a Board vote on the final budget is expected July 24.

All meetings are held at the clubhouse and begin at 6:30 p.m.

Anyone wishing to comment who cannot attend a meeting can email their ideas to the district manager at

patricia.comings-thibault@dpfg.com.

CDD assessment rates were set in the 2008-09 budget. That means rates have not changed in 11 years.

To help continue that record, any residents planning to recommend new spending next year should consider suggesting where cuts can be made elsewhere to offset the new spending.

To help with that effort, the 2018-19 amended Operations & Maintenance budget of \$1,615,464 is shown here on pages 8-9. The O&M budget can change annually depending upon what the Board decides to fund.

Those pages do not show the other part of annual spending. That's the annual Debt Service payment of \$557,421. It repays the bonded debt the District incurred for construction of, among other things, the clubhouse, our streets, two pools, the entrance and six village monuments, two gazebos, the stormwater system, etc.

In August 2018, the Board adopted

a final 2018-19 budget.

In January of this year, the Board voted publicly to amend that budget to appropriate an additional \$338,133 in funds already on hand.

In the interest of transparency, those funds are shown coming into the attached amended budget:

- Line item 4, showing \$137,675 in "unassigned" funds uncovered by new district manager DPFG.
- Line item 6, showing the Board's transfer of \$200,458 from District reserve funds. They are also displayed in the reserves chart shown in the middle of page 9.

The spending of those funds are identified in the amended budget:

- \$156,192 at line item 107 for new landscaping to be planted this spring.
- \$95,624 at line item 108 for the repainting of privacy walls and CDD structures, discussed on page 5.
- \$86,317 at line item 109 for the removal of plants from the wetlands buffer, described on pages 10-11. 

Pasco lowers pond level ...

Continued from page 6

That forced work to stop on Feb. 22 as engineers looked at alternatives to repair the damage.

That solution is a process called a "cured in place pipe liner," explained senior project manager Efrain Figueroa.

County officials say that solution should not require any lowering of the pond level, depending upon the water table level at the time the repairs are made.

This solution begins with inserting a pneumatic plug in the pond end of the pipe and then draining the pipe from the plug to the street end.

A camera unit (like the one pictured on page 6) then runs through the pipe and identifies all cracks, debris and damage. A crew then patches all cracks and breaks, and removes any debris.

A felt and epoxy resin liner – much like a stent or a sock – is then inserted into the pipe, he explained.

Boiling water is pumped through the liner for 6-12 hours, causing the epoxy to expand to the pipe's diameter and harden (or "cure"). "It's like a pipe within a pipe," Mr. Figueroa said, "about a half-inch thick."

The county has already spent the \$15,000 earmarked for this project. It must now return to the Board of County Commissioners for the \$20,000 needed to finish it. That authorization is expected in late March, which would allow work to resume in early April.

Mr. Figueroa explained this process is beneficial to residents in at least three ways:



Piping in red along Glenapp Drive (at top) connects to the damaged pipe (at bottom center), which also accepts runoff along Sandgate Ct.

- First, it can be completed within a day or two. "We come in after many people have left in the morning for the day and are done and gone before they come home at night. They won't even know we were there."
- Second, this process only blocks one lane of traffic. The main alternative process – pipe replacement – would have blocked both lanes of traffic for three days. That would have prevented some residents from leaving and others from getting to their homes.

Continued on page 15

BALLANTRAЕ CDD - STATEMENT I
FY 2019 PROPOSED GENERAL FUND AMENDMENT #1

		FY 2019 ADOPTED	FY 2019 PROPOSED AMEND	FY 2019 ADOPTED
1	O&M REVENUES:			
2	LANDOWNER ASSESSMENTS (NET)	\$ 1,024,660	\$ -	\$ 1,024,660
3	EXCESS FEES CARRYFORWARD PREVIOUS YEARS	2,812	-	2,812
4	CARRYOVER FROM PREVIOUS YEARS (FUND BALANCE FORWARD)	111,648	137,675	249,323
5	OTHER INCOME	-	-	-
6	TRANSFER IN FROM RESERVE FUNDS	-	200,458	200,458
7	O&M TOTAL REVENUES:	1,139,120	338,133	1,477,253
8				
9	O&M ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENDITURES:			
10	BOARD OF SUPERVISORS			
11	SUPERVISOR STIPENDS	14,000	-	14,000
12	NEWSLETTER - PRINT & MAILING	10,000	-	10,000
13	WEBSITE SERVER & NAME	880	-	880
14	PUBLIC OFFICIALS LIABILITY INSURANCE	3,300	-	3,300
15	MANAGEMENT SERVICES			
16	ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	-	-	-
17	DISTRICT MANAGEMENT	53,200	-	53,200
18	FINANCIAL CONSULTING SERVICES	-	-	-
19	ACCOUNTING SERVICES	-	-	-
20	ENGINEERING & LEGAL SERVICES			
21	DISTRICT ENGINEER	18,000	-	18,000
22	DISTRICT COUNSEL	17,300	-	17,300
23	ADMINISTRATIVE: OTHER			
24	ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT	3,700	-	3,700
25	DISCLOSURE REPORT	1,000	-	1,000
26	TRUSTEES FEES	3,772	-	3,772
27	PROPERTY APPRAISER FEE	150	-	150
28	LEGAL ADVERTISING	750	-	750
29	ARBITRAGE REBATE CALCULATION	650	-	650
30	DUES, LICENSES AND FEES	1,200	-	1,200
31	ADMINISTRATIVE CONTINGENCY	5,000	-	5,000
32	O&M ADMINISTRATIVE TOTAL:	132,902	-	132,902
33				
34	INSURANCE			
35	GERNERAL LIABILITY	3,177	-	3,177
36	PROPERTY CASUALTY	9,709	-	9,709
37	INSURANCE TOTAL	12,886	-	12,886
38				
39	UTILITY SERVICES			
40	ELECTRIC UTILITY SERVICES	23,000	-	23,000
41	ELECTRIC UTILITY - RECREATION FACILITIES	15,500	-	15,500
42	ELECTRIC STREET LIGHTING	103,500	-	103,500
43	UTILITY - WATER - CLUBHOUSE & POOLS	14,000	-	14,000
44	STORMWATER ASSESSMENT	2,200	-	2,200
45	UTILITY SERVICES SUBTOTAL	158,200	-	158,200
46				
47	LAKES/PONDS & LANDSCAPE			
48	LAKES/PONDS: CONTRACTS			
49	AQUATIC CONTRACT	22,800	-	22,800
50	LAKES/PONDS: OTHER			
51	FOUNTAIN REPAIRS & MAINTNANCE	3,000	-	3,000
52	MITIGATION AREAS: MONITOR & MAINTAIN	1,500	-	1,500
53	LAKE/POND REPAIRS	10,000	-	10,000
54	INSTALL/REPLACE AQUATIC PLANTS	5,000	-	5,000
55	LANDSCAPING: CONTRACTS			
56	LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE CONTRACT	144,240	-	144,240
57	LANDSCAPE - SECONDARY CONTRACTS	31,212	-	31,212
58	LANDSCAPE OVERSIGHT/MANAGEMENT	-	-	-
59	LANDSCAPING: OTHER			
60	IRRIGATION REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE	14,000	-	14,000
61	REPLACE PLANTS, MULCH & TREES	36,500	-	36,500
62	SOD & SEED REPLACEMENT	10,000	-	10,000
63	LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT	-	-	-
64	EXTRA MOWINGS DURING RAINY SEASON	5,000	-	5,000
65	RUST PREVENTION FOR IRRIGATION SYSTEM	10,380	-	10,380
66	FIELD MISCELLANEOUS (INCLUSIVE OF TRAPPER)	13,000	-	13,000
67	LAKES/PONDS & LANDSCAPE TOTAL	306,632	-	306,632
68				
69	STREETS, SIDEWALKS, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS			
70	STREETS & SIDEWALKS			
71	ENTRY & WALLS MAINTENANCE	2,000	-	2,000
72	STREET/DECORATIVE LIGHT MAINTENACE	1,000	-	1,000
73	SIDEWALK REPAIR & MAINTENANCE	1,500	-	1,500
74	MAINTENANCE STAFF			
75	EMPLOYEE - SALARIES	79,480	-	79,480
76	EMPLOYEE - P/R TAXES	6,833	-	6,833
77	EMPLOYEE - WORKERS COMP	3,960	-	3,960
78	PAYROLL PROCESSING FEES	1,900	-	1,900
79	EMPLOYEE- HEALTH & PHONE STIPENDS	9,600	-	9,600
80	MILEAGE	1,100	-	1,100
81	STREETS, SIDEWALKS, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS	107,373	-	107,373
82				
83	CLUBHOUSE & SAFETY & SECURITY			
84	CLUBHOUSE & MISCELLANEOUS			
85	PARK/FIELD REPAIRS	2,000	-	2,000
86	CLUBHOUSE FACILITY MAINTENANCE	9,000	-	9,000
87	CLUBHOUSE TELEPHONE/INTERNET/FAX	4,200	-	4,200
88	MISCELLANEOUS SUPPLIES (INCLUSIVE OF DEBIT CARD)	3,500	-	3,500
89	POOL/FOUNTAIN/SPALSH PAD MAINTENANCE	10,000	-	10,000
90	POOL PERMITS	750	-	750

**BALLANTRAE CDD - STATEMENT 1
FY 2019 PROPOSED GENERAL FUND AMENDMENT #1**

		FY 2019 ADOPTED	FY 2019 PROPOSED AMEND	FY 2019 ADOPTED
91	SEASONAL LIGHTING	20,000	-	20,000
92	PEST CONTROL	520	-	520
93	CLUBHOUSE EXTERIOR FURNISHINGS	-	-	-
94	CLUBHOUSE CLEANING	-	-	-
95	CLUBHOUSE MISCELLANEOUS	7,500	-	7,500
96	SAFETY & SECURITY			
97	PART-TIME LAW ENFORCEMENT DETAILS	50,000	-	50,000
98	SALARY FOR SUMMER MONITOR AT BOTH POOLS	23,500	-	23,500
99	EMPLOYEE P/R TAXES	2,000	-	2,000
100	EMPLOYEE WORKER'S COMP	1,300	-	1,300
101	VIDEO SURVEILLANCE	-	-	-
102	SECURITY - OTHER (GATE SERVICE)	1,000	-	1,000
103	CLUBHOUSE & SAFETY & SECURITY	135,270	-	135,270
104				
105	O&M CONTINGENCY & CAPITAL PROJECTS			
106	O&M Contingency	44,257	-	44,257
107	ENTRANCES & OTHER PLANT REPLACEMENT	-	156,192	156,192
108	WALL & STRUCTURE PAINTING	-	95,624	95,624
109	INVASIVE & UNDESIRABLE PLANT REMOVAL	-	86,317	86,317
110	O&M CONTINGENCY & CAPITAL PROJECTS TOTAL	44,257	338,133	382,390
111				
112	TOTAL EXPENDITURES BEFORE OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES)	897,520	338,133	1,235,653
113				
114	EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER (UNDER) EXPEND.	241,600	-	241,600
115				
116	OTHER FINANCING SOURCES AND (USES)			
117	RESERVES TRANSFERS OUT-OTHER FINANCING USES			
118	EMERGENCY RESERVE	20,000	-	20,000
119	ASSET RESERVE	46,600	-	46,600
120	BILL PAYMENT RESERVE	-	-	-
121	PARK DEVELOPMENT RESERVE	175,000	-	175,000
122	TOTAL OTHER FINANCING SOURCES AND (USES)	241,600	-	241,600
123				
124	O&M TOTAL EXPENDITURES	1,139,120	338,133	1,477,253
125				
126	NET CHANGE IN FUND BALANCE	(0)	-	(0)
127	BEGINNING FUND BALANCE GENERAL FUND (adjusted for FY 2018)	S 82,307	S 259,419	
128	LESS FUND BALANCE FORWARD	S (114,460)	S (249,323)	
129	ENDING FUND BALANCE - GENERAL FUND	S (32,153)	S 10,096	
130	ENDING FUND BALANCE - RESERVE FUND (Stmt 2)	S 1,559,131	S 1,605,366	
131	TOTAL FUND BALANCE - GENERAL & RESERVE FUNDS	S 1,526,980	S 1,615,464	

Status of Ballantrae CDD reserve accounts

The chart below details the status of all CDD reserve accounts. It also shows the usage of some reserve account funds in the amended budget shown above. Line item #6 above shows \$200,458 transferred into the amended budget from reserve funds. That \$200,458 is shown below being subtracted from the Asset Reserve (\$55,204) plus Emergency Reserve (\$145,254) accounts.

Reserve Balance Summary	Total FY 2018	FY 2019 Adopted	Total FY 2019	FY 2019 Amended	Total FY 2019
Park Development	785,035	175,000	960,035	0	960,035
Asset Reserve	396,554	46,600	443,154	(55,204)	387,950
Emergency Reserve	226,864	20,000	246,864	(145,254)	101,610
Bill Payment Reserve	150,678	0	150,678	0	150,678
Total	1,559,131	241,600	1,800,731	(200,458)	1,600,273

Explanation of reserve accounts

- The Park Development Fund is earmarked for general park amenity improvements, construction of a new clubhouse and then the conversion of the existing meeting room to a community fitness center.
- The Asset Reserve fund plans for anticipated high-price costs, such as re-roofing the clubhouse or gazebos, re-lining the pools, stormwater system repairs, etc.
- The Emergency Fund is a guard against unanticipated costs such as uninsurable hurricane damage and costs that can arise during the fiscal year after the budget is completed.
- The Bill Payment fund covers expenses due after the fiscal year begins on Oct. 1 but before tax revenue arrives from the county in late November and December.

CDD's wetland buffer cutback manages future growth

By Joseph Hamilton
Operations Manager
Genesis Land Maintenance

The need for cutbacks within the Ballantrae CDD buffer zones surrounding its state-designated wetlands became apparent in the late summer of 2018.

That's when the CDD Board and its partners began

discussing these concerns with the growth of invasive and other undesirable plants:

- Excessive wetland plant growth over the past 15 years had expanded to encroach upon some private property. Some residents went so far as to described the closeness as "claustrophobic."

- That approaching vegetation included a host of invasive plants that threatened not only the health of residents and their pets, but also the Florida-friendly plants and other flora landowners are trying to grow in their yards.

- Last, but not least, the approaching vegetation could potentially become additional fuel close to homes if Ballantrae fell victim to the brush fires common in Florida during the winter dry season.

Working with the CDD Board and its engineer, Tonja Stewart of Stantec, Genesis Land Maintenance set out to survey each of the 14 state-designated wetland conservation areas within the District boundaries.

The goal was to formulate a plan to eliminate invasive and exotic species within CDD-owned buffer zones surrounding each designated wetland. That would limit such invasive growth to within the wetlands themselves, and keep them out of private property bordering the buffer.

Species targeted for removal included Brazilian Pepper, Florida's most notorious noxious plant, along with Chinese Tallow, Primrose Willow and Caesar weed. Each plant offers its own unique threat to the residents who share property adjacent to the wetland buffer zones.

Primrose Willow contains agents toxic to animals (mainly pets) who ingest the plant due to its inviting yellow flowers. Brazilian Pepper shares traits with poison ivy which can cause not only topical irritation to humans and animals alike, but respiratory irritation as well.

Overall it was clear that these plants required immediate removal so that native low-lying wetland species would be allowed to propagate and regain prominence in wetland buffer areas.

Initially, a contract was written to cutback buffer areas at a minimum of two feet to a maximum of 30 feet back into the wetlands, as close as possible to the stands of native cypress trees. They generally define the border of the actual wetlands.



This excavator equipped with a mulching attachment did most of the work in clearing the wetland buffer zone, as shown in photos on page 11 at right.

It was at the first work site where it became obvious that there may be more to the story than initially thought.

It was at the wetlands across Mentmore Blvd. from the clubhouse that we learned that some buffer areas would far exceed the expected 30-foot maximum depth to adequately reach our end goal.

A majority of the other areas targeted also exceeded 50-100 feet back from residential properties back to cypress stands. Some areas could only be cut back 5-25 feet due to high water table levels within the conservation zones.

The methodology of the wetland buffer maintenance begins with a standard forestry mulching technique. It utilizes both an excavator with a mulching attachment (like the one shown at left) as well as a smaller, skid steer with a mulching attachment for tight, hard-to-access areas.

That avoided any activity that would disturb the soil so much that it would have

increased turbidity levels in natural areas. That disturbance would have occurred if excavation buckets were used rather than mulchers.

The entire three-month project cost Ballantrae \$86,317 for Genesis to remove growth along 38,363 linear feet with varying depths. The project was completed in March.

Some residents asked variations of this question: "What can be done to ensure the buffer zone growth is controlled in the future?"

The answer is that the CDD Board has expanded its aquatic maintenance and spraying contract to include the monthly spraying of all buffer areas to control growth.

Speaking solely from my own experience, this spraying plan is crucial. Without it, invasive vegetation will come back with ferocity, as it has in districts that didn't perform follow-up maintenance. UDEP- and FDACS-approved herbicide treatment methods will target any new growth of invasive and exotic species — while avoiding collateral damage to desirable growth of plants such as Swamp Fern, Duck Potato, Pickerelweed and Wax Myrtles.

Going forward, residents who live adjacent to these newly-exposed areas can assist the District by monitoring how these areas are developing over time. Residents living full-time near these cleared properties may very well notice minor, nuanced changes in plant growth before Board contractors who may only be on site monthly.

Residents will notice that some vehicle ruts, downed tree limbs and other natural flora have been left scattered in some cleared areas. Their removal was as unnecessary as it would have been expensive. And they are reminders that these areas remain wetland buffers or simply

Continued on page 16



Top three photos show excavator compacting and then grinding into fresh mulch the trees and other wetland buffer growth. Photo above shows buffer as the excavator approached it at a second site, while photo below shows the results of work at that second site.



Rules for obtaining a Ballantrae CDD photo ID “swipe card”

Please read both pages before applying for card(s):

Only photo ID “swipe cards” issued by the CDD Board of Supervisors will open gated facilities within Ballantrae. The card controls gate access [1] in Ballantrae Park to the clubhouse and pool plus the basketball and tennis courts, as well as [2] to the CDD-owned pool in Straiton. Everyone seeking an individual photo ID swipe card must be at least 13 years of age, show proof of age and CDD membership as described below.

The CDD Board adopted the photo ID swipe card system in 2011 to address two main objectives sought by many of our CDD members:

- To reduce crowding by limiting use to the paying members of our CDD and approved guests.
- To foster peaceful enjoyment by allowing the CDD Board to suspend the privileges of anyone who disrupts usage of the facilities, misbehaves and/or refuses to follow posted rules.

Swipe cards are only available at the clubhouse. The resident homeowner/renter must be present when any household member requests a photo ID card. The resident landowner/renter accepts responsibility for actions by home card holders. The process of filling out an application and getting a card takes only a few minutes:

- Call the clubhouse (345-8565) to set an appointment or to ask questions about getting a card.
- Come to the clubhouse between 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. any day of the week and take “pot luck” if maintenance staff is available to process your card(s).
- Applications can be obtained online at the CDD website at ballantraecdd.org at the Clubhouse & Amenities tab at the end of the third paragraph.

The following categories of photo ID cards are issued:

- Adult residents (18 and older) who document home ownership or rental in Ballantrae.
- Adults that those owners/renters document reside with them (such as adult children),
- Adults that those owners/renters identify as caregivers to their minor child(ren) as described in the Caregiver form available at the clubhouse and online at the CDD website at ballantraecdd.org at the Clubhouse & Amenities tab at the end of the third paragraph.
- Adult non-residents who wish to pay to become CDD members. The annual non-resident user fee is \$1,800, non-refundable, for the period of Oct. 1-Sept. 30. A pro-rated fee of \$150/month shall be charged for those that wish to purchase during the fiscal year and shall be calculated to reflect the number of months remaining in the fiscal year (number of months remaining multiplied by \$150).
- Minors between the ages of 13-17, for whom adult landowner/renter members document custody and request swipe cards.

The first two photo ID cards per member household resident are issued for free. Additional cards require pre-payment of a \$5 fee. No “family” swipe cards are issued. Each resident age 13 and older must have their own, individual swipe card bearing their photo, name and address. Adults receive cards with a green box around their photo. A red box surrounds the photo on cards issued to minors (age 13-17). Nonresident adult caregiver card photos are enclosed in a blue box.

(Continued on next page)

In addition, residents can obtain letters of access that allows a visitor to use gated facilities for up to 14 days per visit twice a year under the established rules. Resident applicant (with own ID swipe card) and visitor (with own photo ID) must visit the clubhouse together to make application.

Residency and age documentation required when applying for a photo ID card:

1. PROOF OF RESIDENCY:

- Home ownership: Ownership is automatically confirmed if a Ballantrae residence is owner-occupied and the name(s) of owner(s) appear on county tax records. If not, resident ownership can be proven with a copy of the property's tax bill, or any other legal document confirming resident's ownership.
- Rental status: Renter(s) must produce that part of their lease bearing their name(s) and the Ballantrae residence address, dates of tenancy and the name and signature of the property owner or manager.
- For other adults residing with resident homeowners or renters: they can prove co-residency with a driver's license showing that Ballantrae address, or USPS mail delivered in their name to that Ballantrae address.
- For caregivers and nonresident CDD members: produce a driver's license showing their current address or USPS mail delivered in their name to their current address.

2. PROOF OF AGE:

- For adults: a valid driver's license, other government-issued photo ID or birth certificate.
- For minors: A parent or legal guardian must accompany all minors seeking cards. The parent or guardian must show the minor's birth certificate, state-issued photo ID or some other official document confirming [1] the adult's custodial status and [2] the minor's date of birth or age.

In applying for and then in using a swipe ID card, applicants acknowledge that:

- Cardholders will follow all posted rules as well as direction given by any member of the Board of Supervisors, its staff and/or law enforcement.
- Cardholders will use only their own ID card and will show it to staff upon request.
- Cardholders will not allow anyone else to use their card.
- Cardholders will observe the daily opening/closing hours for use of CDD facilities.
- Cardholders 18 years of age and older may bring in up to four "guests" (nonresidents or residents not in possession of their own ID card). Cardholder must remain on premises and supervise "guests" as long as any are on-site.
- Cardholders between 13-17 years of age are not allowed any "guests" at any time.
- Caregivers are limited to bringing in as "guests" only the child(ren) they supervise.
- Children under age 13 must at all times be accompanied and supervised by an adult cardholder, who must take all children with them when they leave.

Refusal to comply with these rules may result in confiscation of photo ID "swipe card," suspension of access privileges and/or the filing of trespassing charges at the discretion of the Ballantrae CDD Board of Supervisors, its representatives or law enforcement.

This article lists some, but not necessarily all, of the real estate transactions completed in Ballantrae in October-December. This list is designed to give readers an idea of the number and location of sales plus the range of sale prices.

Ayrshire

- 17926 Ayrshire Blvd., 4 bedrooms/2 baths/2-car garage, 1,825 sq. ft., sold on 10/15/18 for \$228,000.
- 3328 Downan Point Dr., 3/3/2, 2,092 sq. ft., 12/14/18, \$302,000.
- 3219 Gianna Way, 5/3/2, 2,260 sq. ft., 12/19/18, \$253,400.

Braemar

- 3613 Barnweill St., 4/2/3, 2,366 sq. ft., 11/27/18, \$285,000.

Castleway

- 3702 Duke Firth St., 3/2.5/2, 2,656 sq. ft., 10/12/18, \$318,000.

Cunningham

- 3712 Beneraid St., 4/2.5/2, 2,662 sq. ft., 10/18/18, \$292,200.
- 3529 Beneraid St., 4/2.5/2, 2,662 sq. ft., 10/24/18, \$280,000.
- 3631 Olde Lanark Dr., 4/2/2, 2,186 sq. ft., 10/31/18, \$258,000.
- 3717 Beneraid St., 5/3/2, 2,260 sq. ft., 11/2/18, \$285,000.

Lintower

- 17507 Glenapp Dr., 3/2.5/2, 2,262 sq. ft., 10/29/18, \$270,000.
- 17620 Glenapp Dr., 3/2.5/2, 2,112 sq. ft., 12/14/18, \$302,000.
- 17512 Sandgate Ct., 3/2.5/2, 2,652 sq. ft., 12/14/18, \$282,500.

Straiton

- 17532 Hugh Lane, 2/2/1, 1,548 sq. ft., 10/1/18, \$168,450.
- 3008 Girvan Dr., 2/2/1, 1,548, 10/1/18, \$180,000.
- 17518 Hugh Lane, 3/2/1, 1,768 sq. ft., 10/5/18, \$194,000.
- 17451 Stinchar Dr., 2/2/1, 1,548 sq. ft., 11/19/18, \$170,000.

Continued at right

Data provided by Team Solkin



Ballantrae HOA encourages property maintenance

This Braemar property shows the care and maintenance the Ballantrae HOA encourages in our community. Landowners and tenants are asked to be mindful of the appearance of their property by complying with deed restrictions. Help make our community look its best!

Next garage sale Apr. 13

The Ballantrae HOA Board has set the second Saturdays of April and October as the permanent days for the semi-annual community garage sales. That allows residents to plan for them far in advance.

That means community garage sales will be held in 2019 on April 13 and Oct. 12. Hours each date are from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

After each garage sale, the HOA hopes to have a Goodwill Industries truck parked at the clubhouse parking lot to accept certain unsold and unwanted items. Goodwill does not, for example, accept bedding (box springs, mattresses or frames).

Do not leave items at the park unless the truck is present! Otherwise, your CDD taxes must pay for maintenance staff to haul dumped items to the county landfill and pay dumping fees. In the meantime, CDD maintenance staff isn't performing the duties for which you pay them. 

Home sales in Ballantrae (continued)

- 2921 Girvan Dr., 3/2.5/1, 1,768 sq. ft., 12/14/18, \$178,000.
- 2908 Girvan Dr., 3/2.5/1, 1,846 sq. ft., 12/26/18, \$190,000.
- 2938 Lochcarron Dr., 3/2.5/1, 1,846 sq. ft., 1/31/19, \$174,500. 



Information that's worth repeating ...

The Communicator repeats the items on this page in most editions for the benefit of new residents and those who missed them before. They provide information on some state laws and county ordinances, while supplying some HOA and CDD information as well. We hope you find these items useful!



Avoid fines by irrigating right day, hours

Residents are reminded that Pasco mandates that lawns only be watered on one assigned day each week, and then only during allowed hours.

By confining your residential irrigation to your proscribed days and pre-set hours, you can avoid fines of \$100-\$500 that can be imposed by the county for residential irrigation outside of approved hours and days.

Routine residential lawn watering using sprinklers is restricted in Pasco County to midnight to 8 a.m. or from 6 p.m. to midnight – but not both – on your assigned watering day.

Those assigned days are:

- Addresses with house numbers ending in 0 or 1 irrigate on Monday.
- Those ending in 2 or 3, Tuesday.
- Those ending in 4 or 5, Wednesday.
- Those ending in 6 or 7, Thursday.
- Those ending in 8 or 9, Friday.
- No weekend watering is allowed.

The CDD Board has a variance that allows different parts of our community property to be irrigated on Mondays through Saturdays.

The variance is posted on the CDD website at ballantraecdd.org at the Other Documents tab at # 5.



Help to keep Ballantrae's streets bright

Ballantrae residents can call the clubhouse maintenance staff to report street light outages if residents provide the pole number.

Or, residents can report street light outages directly to Duke Energy by phone or online.

It takes only a few minutes to report outages in your neighborhood to Duke, and to find out when they will be repaired.

It helps to report both the pole number (on the street side of the pole) as well as the address or intersection nearest the pole (especially for poles without numbers on Ballantrae and Mentmore blvds.).

You can report outages to Duke Energy by calling (800) 228-8485.

Or go to the CDD website at ballantraecdd.org to the Other Documents tab # 25. Fill out the form you will find there and send it. The process takes just a minute. You will receive a confirming email from Duke in response. Normal repairs usually take just 2-3 days.

Wi-Fi at the pools

You can connect your wireless device to the CDD's free WiFi network at the pools in Ballantrae Park and in Straiton.

In the park, search for connections and select the "Ballantrae" SSID.

At the Straiton pool, the SSID is "Straiton".

The password for both is "cypress1". The password is all lower case.

Obey leash, scoop laws

Residents can be fined by the county each time they fail to "scoop the poop" their dog's deposits on someone else's property.

Owners can also be fined if dogs are unleashed outside of an enclosed area – even if its in the owner's front yard or in the open garage.

Residents are also reminded it is illegal to scoop and drop dog waste into a neighbor's garbage bin at curbside. It is also illegal to toss scooped bags into street gutters that will eventually pollute our ponds and waterways.

Pasco lowers pond ...

Continued from page 7

• Third, a liner is much cheaper than a pipe replacement.

At the same time as this work was being performed, Public Works used its closed-circuit mobile cameras to perform routine inspection of other stormwater drains in Lintower. The cameras identified any problems in those pipes that needed to be addressed.

A few residents asked about the lowering of the pond level by pumping water into the adjoining wetland. As the wetland filled, water flowed as designed through a pipe under Mentmore Blvd. into the large pond on the south side of Mentmore.

These two ponds along Mentmore are among three dozen stormwater ponds in Ballantrae.

The lowering of stormwater pond levels has no major affect on local flora and fauna, say county officials and those from the Southwest Florida Water Management District. SWFWMD, whose duties include pond oversight, pre-approved the work being performed by the county.

Pond water depth rises to the height of the area water table. The high water table in Ballantrae began seeping back into this Mentmore pond right after the pump was removed on Feb. 28.

Part of the system's operation is that some ponds actually go dry during the drought season, and then spring back to life when rainfall returns.

Even small amounts of rain are sufficient to nurture the drought-resistant plants the CDD has planted along pond shorelines. They're designed to help prevent pond bank erosion and clean pond water before it flows through the regional water system.

The CDD already had plans to add plants along the Sandgate pond bank this spring.



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The Ballantrae Communicator
17611 Mentmore Boulevard
Land O' Lakes, FL 34638

CDD's wetland buffer cutback manages future growth

Continued from page 10

"swamps," in the vernacular of many residents.

These remaining limbs and flora will ultimately decay, serving to mulch and enrich the buffer zone soil, as they do in the wetlands themselves. The ruts and other exposed ground areas will virtually disappear this summer once many desirable plants grow to heights of 2-3 feet or more.

The floral growth serves as a reminder that no one can take over any cleared areas to landscape, mow or maintain them as if part of their private properties.

They remain native wetlands – or "swamps" – and are intended to return to an ecologically functional state. We hope to see them grow native and desirable plants on their own that benefit Florida's ecology and wildlife. That's why the Southwest Florida Water Management District uses detailed aerial photography to detect any residential or

other illegal uses, incursions or takeovers of wetlands or buffers. It can issue hefty fines for those violations.

As residents assist in monitoring regrowth in the buffer zones, the District and its vendors can ensure these areas remain a haven for Florida-friendly and desirable plants – denying growth to the invasives and undesirables that damage our ecology, environment, health, lifestyle and private as well as community-owned property.

Buffer zone expansion is a new phenomenon that many HOAs and CDDs are facing 15-20 years into the lifespan of their communities. It is our civic duty, as we develop these lands to better suit our lifestyles and needs, to ensure that we are practicing our stewardship responsibly – by keeping Florida natural and, most importantly, functional.

Ballantrae residents should be proud that they are in the forefront in managing these ecological issues. 



White ibis enjoy a smorgasbord of mole crickets, grubs and invasive plants and seeds in our cleared wetlands buffer. See pages 10-11.