

RAINTREE PLANTATION HISTORY

By: William Svejkosky

The years 1976-77 brought about the conception of a development in the Hillsboro, Missouri area named Raintree Plantation. The principals of the Development were Norville and Kenneth McClain of Essex Contracting, Inc. and Jeremiah Nixon, an attorney.

The first tracts of land purchased for the Development occurred during the year 1977. Approximately 640 acres were purchased from Bob and Betty Edwards and approximately 140 adjoining acres were purchased from Bill and Ann Christmann. Along with some smaller tracts, a total of 825 acres became the total development at that time.

The Development's amenities and improvements consisted of a 124 acres lake (Autumn Lake), a club house, tennis court, golf course, beach, camping area, pavilion picnic area and common to each lot a road system along with central sewers and waterlines when needed for home building.

The dam of Autumn Lake was the first dam in the State of Missouri to be built to the new and very rigid standards of the State Government. The construction of the dam was contracted to Bloomsdale Excavating Company, Inc. Autumn Lake has a watershed ratio of at least 11:1. This means that for every one acre of lake surface there are eleven acres draining into the lake. This far surpasses guidelines for a quality lake.

Raintree Plantation soon became known as one of the most successful lake developments nationwide, during the early 1980's (the oil embargo years).

April of 1981 saw the purchase of 316.5 acres from Mr. Charles Fassen. This addition to Raintree became "Raintree Forest" and allowed for 1 to 3 acre tracts for additional home-building choices.

The first Board of Directors were appointed to oversee the business of the Property Owners Association on September 16, 1981. Three year Directors were Jeremiah Nixon, Paul Politte and Tom Gallina. Two year Directors were Faylon Rogers, Ron Kramer and Sam Rauls. One year Directors were Norman "Pete" Harshaw, Roy Fike and Oscar McGee.

The first of the Annual Property Owners Association meetings was held September 1982 in the Hillsboro Junior High School Gym. Elections were held to replace Board Directors of one year standing to three year terms.

On or about November 17, 1983 the Raintree Plantation P.O.A. became incorporated, federally tax exempt, under Provisions of the IRS Code Section 501 (c) (4). The Property Owners Association office building, which had been the Sales Office for the Development was purchased by the Property Owner Association during the year 1983. Sometime between April and October of 1984, the condominiums were built.

Raintree Plantation roads and amenities were turned over to the Property Owners Association on November 11, 1984 by the Developers. The Developers maintained ownership of the Country Club, Golf Course, Tennis Court and Central Utilities.

The original number of lots (including Raintree Forest) were close to being sold out in 1986.

In 1987, an additional adjoining 300 plus acres were purchased by the Developers in a combination sale from Mr. Vernon Edmond and wife Eunice, Mr. Norman Pedigo

and Mr. Lawrence Edmond and wife Theresa. Mr. And Mrs. Vernon Edmond's home and barn were just north of Lot 12/Section 22. There existed a large spring at their home site which provided them with water. All of this is now under water.

This expansion of Raintree Plantation allowed, in addition to lots, the construction of the 54 acre lake, the 11.5 acre lake and the 6 acre lake. The watershed ratio is considerably higher for these three lakes than that of Autumn Lake.

The 54 Acre Lake has, located at the access points, Fire Department pump lines. This allows the Fire Department to pump water out of the Lake to fill their tanker trucks if more fire fighting water is ever needed. Also, the Golf Course Sprinkler System has water pumped from the 54 acre lake to irrigate fairways and greens.

Since the three lakes have not been named, I would suggest the following: the 54 acre lake be named Spring Lake, the 11.5 acre lake be named Summer Lake and the 6 acre lake be named Winter Lake.

There were changes made to the Country Club Complex during the year 1988. The Club Building was expanded to the west, in essence doubling the size of the building. The Tennis Court was moved to its present location to allow the Golf Course Maintenance Building and Cart Garage to be built.

There were two attempts to consider the Property Owners purchasing the Country Club and associated amenities from the Developers.

The first, approximately 1989, was not met with enthusiasm at that time. The second by an appointed committee during 1994. The committee suggested investigating a means to finance such a purchase, however this was never concluded.

During the year 1997 the Golf Course Irrigation System was upgraded and the fairways were sprigged with Bermuda grass. This was a real benefit this past year, considering the lack of rain, as the Course was in excellent shape.

During the year 1998, the water supply system and sewage treatment plant went through major improvements. The water system had the installation of the elevated water storage tank which has a capacity of 50,000 gallons. Because of the height of the tank, a more constant water pressure is measured throughout the whole system. Eliminating wide fluctuations of pressure allows the water distribution system had the installation of the elevated water storage tank which has a capacity of 50,000 gallons. Because of the height of the tank, a more constant water pressure is measured throughout the whole system. Eliminating wide fluctuations of pressure allows the water distribution system to be saved from the on/off jolts of the well pumps, thereby eliminating waterline maintenance.

The old water column tank is no longer part of the system, however it could be activated if needed.

The treatment plant was upgraded to a "2 stage plant" which can be better controlled to meet requirements of Governmental Agencies.

Raintree Plantation now consists of approximately 1,800 acres. Within these acres are 3,162 building lots, approximately 39 miles of roads, 4 lakes, 2 boat launch ramps, 20 camping sites, a swimming beach, a picnic pavilion, a maintenance garage and depot for material and the Property owners building. Also, the Country club building, tennis court, swimming pool and 18 hole Golf Course (6,122 yards long) enhance property values.

Section 1-E of Raintree Plantation Amended Covenants and Restrictions establish the subdivision as a Bird Sanctuary, which requires that firearms cannot be discharged within the borders of the Sanctuary.

While reviewing the minutes of the Board of Directors of the Property Owners Association, two names of current residents consistently show up. Beverly Toma and Jerry Sojka, both served almost continually from 1982 to 1999. As a side note, Bill and Ann Christmann donated land bordering Raintree's west-northwest property line to the Missouri department of Conservation "Valley View Glades" Natural History Area. Ann Christmann has been a long time resident of Raintree.

The Sunday Edition (November 14, 1999) of the News Democrat Journal featured the One Room school House which sits on the property of Oliver and Bernice Huskey. The Huskey Farm adjoins the eastern border of Raintree where Smoky Hollow, Blue Ridge, Sun Ridge and Sun Rise Streets abut East Vista. This building is under consideration to be moved for preservation. Having talked with various members of the Huskey Family, several comments have been made regarding this same border. One was that in the late 1700's, early 1800's when the Huskey Family started farming the valley of Belew Creek, Native Indians would sit on the hillside and watch the farming going on below. The other comment was that on the same hillside exists several grave sites of slaves. I have searched for some sign of this, but have not been successful. However, the hillside is made up of large slabs of flat limestone, layered like shelf rock.

From personal observation and memory I recall seeing the farm of the Edwards, which now would be under water. The farm house was just south of Jerry's Point with

the large barn and other building scattered about. One of the very small buildings was reported to have been housing for slaves.

Incidentally, I had always been against slavery until I realized I married one.

Another building I recall was located between Fairways 8 and 9, just west of the 9th Green. This building, I recall, was one room of log construction. When I saw it, it was about to fall over, very deteriorated and unclear to me as to its past use. I can only guess that it was used for some human habitat many, many years ago.

Maybe, there are property owners and neighbors who have additional information about our present surroundings referred to as Raintree Plantation. If so, please contact me at (636) 797-4883.

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