



June 21, 2025

Dear Somerset Estates Homeowners,

It's time for Lisa and Steve to give everyone an update on where we are on our journey to determine a path forward for the ponds in Somerset Estates, while making sure our neighborhood remains a premium subdivision in Boulder County.

As you know we've spent the last several weeks coming up to speed on our pond system. Our first order of business has been to interact with various homeowners to gather feedback and opinions about our community's ponds. We've now spoken with 13 homeowners, about half of whom we're calling "Pond Proximity owners" (those who live near the ponds) and the other half "Pond Remote owners" (those who live further away from the ponds). We had hoped to have a larger sample size by this time, but our desire to meet face-to-face with owners has slowed our discussions a bit. We do intend to expand our sample size soon. In the meantime, the following are some **observations and general opinions** from our talks so far:

- **Pond Proximity owners** have contributed a few inputs, including,
  - They enjoy walking the public ponds frequently, both those around the main waterfalls on Outlot D (e.g., ponds 2 and 3, and our two waterfalls on or next to those ponds), and those adjacent to the open space.
  - They are concerned about the idea of creating public places around ponds that could draw nonresidents to our common areas, creating parking issues and gatherings in areas that were not originally designed to accommodate such activity.
  - They are worried about our property values dropping if ponds were to be removed and believe the values of all properties in Somerset Estates could fall if this were to occur.
  - Will there be enough water retention for irrigation if we reduce size of the pond system.
- **Pond Remote owners**
  - Seem most concerned about expenditures on what they would call "private ponds" (e.g., our easement ponds, particularly ponds 4-7). Should easement pond property owners contribute more to the expense of these ponds?
  - Are there more important areas we should be diverting our capital expenditures to retain a premium look.
- Most homeowners seem to support the idea of continuing to maintain the common infrastructure on Outlot D as a well-designed and maintained centerpiece for Somerset Estates.

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- In our discussions, Lisa and Steve believe there may be a misunderstanding in the community about how the ponds were originally architected to serve the irrigation needs of our common property. See second priority below.
- We're also seeking input from realtors to see how they perceive Somerset Estates as compared with other high-end subdivisions in our area.

Our second priority has been to understand how the ponds were built as a system to irrigate our common areas and to support a "premium" look and feel. Our preliminary view is that pond 7, and later pond 2, were enabled, at least in part, to provide proper irrigation coverage to our greenways, gardens, etc. However, we also think that tradeoffs could be considered if we are willing to tolerate brown/yellow areas at times in our premium greenways and gardens. We are trying to quantify this issue now for better homeowner and Board decision making.

Based on our current findings, Lisa and Steve plan to hold at least two homeowner education/interaction programs about our ponds. These sessions will be supported by Garrett Quackenbush, who maintains our ponds with his son Ryan and through his company, GTL. The purpose of the meetings will be to educate homeowners about the architecture of our pond system, and to gather more input from the community about alternatives being considered.

In addition, we plan to scrub the pond capital expenditure estimates that were included in the Aspen Specialties Reserve Study to confirm that we're using reasonable cost numbers that will enable us to make sound decisions when considering tradeoffs around maintaining our pond system. The "big ticket" pond-related expenditures in the Reserve Study are the liner replacement costs for ponds 2, 3, and 7. We're making good progress on getting water leakage data and alternative cost estimates and replacement timelines.

We're also looking at Pond 3, which is leaking and in sore need of repair. In the past, alternatives explored ranged from keeping Pond 3 unchanged, to replacing it with a stream, to several ideas in between. So far, we've found that the original cost estimates for these alternatives were within \$20k of each, leading to the conclusion that pond 3 is really an esthetic choice, not a cost issue. You'll further recall, the last board included ~\$127k of Pond 3 rebuilding expenditures in our 2025 budget, which excludes landscaping refurbishment on Outlot D.

Our preliminary opinion, based on feedback from homeowners thus far, is to keep Pond 3 about the same shape and depth as it is today, make the Fall reliable, but we invite further input on this question. We also want to let you know that we appreciate the relative sense of urgency around getting Outlot D 'fixed' as soon as possible; this small volunteer group is working as fast as possible.

Finally, we're aware that some homeowners are concerned about the legal status of our ponds and legal issues surrounding our water use. We intend to investigate those issues and concerns at some point.

To recap, our goals over the next few months are as follows:

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1. Interview at least ~10 additional homeowners and request input about their perspective on the ponds.
2. Finalize the capital replacement cost estimates and timing modifications that we think are appropriate as compared with the Reserve Study.
3. Sponsor at least two open forums to educate and interact with homeowners on pond-related issues.
4. Resolve legal status.
5. Increase unity within our neighborhood based on facts and seek compromise on a direction forward.

We are looking forward to continuing our work and interacting with all homeowners on this important topic to our community. We look forward to seeing you at our information meetings, and we hope you enjoy your summers!!

Best,

*Lisa Smith and Steve Flannery*

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