

Saw Creek Estates

Strategic Plan – September 2020
Saw Creek Estates Community Association
Bushkill, Pennsylvania



Board of Directors:

Kathi Connell - President

Bill Montgomery-Vice President

Debra Wulff – Secretary

Pat Kirby – Treasurer

Jack Burchill– Director

Peggy Gottshau – Director

John Graham - Director

James Hidalgo - Director

Art Kalpin - Director

General Manager – Elijah Jones



Strategic Plan – September 2020

Table of Contents

Brief History of Saw Creek	Page 3
Our Mission Statement	Page 3
Our Values	Page 4
Our Vision	Page 5
Function of Strategic Plan	Page 5
<u>Specific Actions</u>	
I. Communications	Page 6
II. Community Governance and Management	Page 7
III. Community Lifestyle	Page 8
IV. Environmental Stewardship	Page 9
V. Facilities/Amenities	Page 10
VI. Financial	Page 12
VII. Marketing	Page 13
VII. Relationship with Neighboring Communities	Page 13
IX. Restaurant Operations	Page 14



Strategic Plan – September 2020

Brief History of Saw Creek Estates

Saw Creek Estates is a private residential subdivision of nearly 3,000 properties, conceived and developed as one of the premier, four-season recreational communities in the Pocono Mountains. Construction of roads, common area facilities and amenities begun in the 1970's by Lehman-Pike Development Corporation. Sales of year-round and vacation homes continued at a brisk pace throughout the 80's and 90's.

New home sales gradually began to slow in the late 1990's as the development was approaching 75% build-out. As required by the Pennsylvania Uniform Planned Community Act (68 pa.C.S. §§5101), unit-owners were elected to serve along with developer representative(s) on the governing Board of Directors of the community. This began the process of transitioning control of the community from the developer to the unit owners/members.

Ongoing maintenance of common areas, roadways, infrastructure, and amenities became an increasing concern of the owners as the developer's interest in the community was nearing its end. After many months of intense negotiation and litigation, the unit owners were awarded \$5M for future operating and capital expenditures and then establishment a replacement reserve fund.

Saw Creek Estates Community Association, Inc. was formed for the purpose of managing the rapidly growing community and transitioning full control from the developer to the property owners. All property owners are members of the Association, which is governed by a Board of Directors elected by the membership and managed by an experienced staff of professionals. The transfer of control was completed in the year 2000 and since that time, the community has continued to grow and flourish.

Today Saw Creek Estates is one of the largest, best managed, and most financially sound private communities in the region. While there has been considerable progress in recent years, there are some aspects of Saw Creek Estates which if enhanced will ensure that Saw Creek remains as the preeminent community in the Poconos. For this reason, Saw Creek Estates needs a clear vision and plan if it is to be counted among the absolute best in terms of community lifestyle, service, convenience and amenities available to its members and guests.

Our Mission Statement

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Manage the business and property of the association making informed decisions for the benefit of the Association and its members. All decisions of the Board will be to improve the residential living environment that leads to a financially sound, pristine, enjoyable, and safe community.



Strategic Plan – September 2020

ADMINISTRATION

Management and Staff shall provide critical input to the Board to help manage the community and properly carryout the policies and decisions of the Board of Directors to sustain a thriving and inclusive residential community.

Our Values

Our Core Values:

- Exemplary Service to one and all
- Teamwork, Trust, Transparency, and Integrity
- Guidance, Support and Respect
- Ensuring a fun, safe, peaceful, friendly, and enjoyable community
- Long Term Sustainability

Expanded Values:

Accountability/Ethical Behavior. As Advisory Committees, Boards and Team Members, we are responsible to the Association’s Membership for all our actions. We are guided by standards of honesty, objectivity, and integrity. We conduct Association business and make decisions consistently in the best interest of our Members.

Excellence. We provide Members with high quality services and are responsive to their needs. We treat Members and guests with respect, dignity, courtesy and in a professional manner.

Financial Responsibility. We are good stewards of the financial resources entrusted to the Association by its Membership. We constantly seek to find better, more efficient and cost-effective ways to conduct our business, so lifestyle and property values are enhanced.

Leadership. We strongly encourage our Members to participate and have a voice in the life of their Association and the larger Community. The Association plays a proactive role in determining the future of the Saw Creek Community and the larger community outside of Saw Creek. We work in partnership and collaboration with other groups to shape and guide this future.

Environment. We are driven to protect and enhance the natural environment that makes Saw Creek such a special place. Living in balanced harmony with nature enriches Members’ quality of life.

Homeowner Value. We strive to create a more beautiful, safer, and all-around better place to live for while maintaining and increasing property values.



Strategic Plan – September 2020

Our Vision

To be widely recognized by Members, responsible homebuyers, the real estate industry, and our community association peers as progressive and innovative leaders of the best managed, most financially sound, and Member-focused community in the region.

Endeavor to promote an excellent fulltime and vacation living environment that supports the health, safety, security, accessibility, recreation, comfort, and beauty for our membership. Continue to upgrade our existing amenities and maintain a solid balance sheet with a view towards increasing property values making Saw Creek an excellent place to live and invest.



Strategic Plan – September 2020

Function of a Strategic Plan

The goal of the Strategic Plan is to provide a roadmap to the future that permits the Association to be more proactive and more efficient. The Strategic Plan will chart the course for Saw Creek reflecting the needs, desires and aspirations of the Saw Creek Property Owners and guests so necessary to the future success of the association. Clearly, this plan should be a living document, reviewed by the Board, Management and Committees on an annual basis to adjust and reflect changes where appropriate. The plan will be updated on an annual basis after the yearly elections.

STRATEGIC PLAN

I. Communications

Strategic Goal

Enhance and expand all Communication Channels internally with our Property Owners as well as externally with realtors, legislators, and press.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Professional marketing firm and staff will continue development and implementation of Marketing and Public Relations plans to improve communications and promote Saw Creek Estates Community Association through all available channels. Utilize advances in technology to enhance all types of communications for frequent sharing of activity information across membership categories to assure the accuracy, completeness, and professional quality of Association communications. Creation or periodic survey to be developed by the designated marketing vendor approx. every three (3) years.
- b. Continue to expand internal communication to better facilitate community services, volunteer programs, security and safety, disaster preparedness, and other member information services.
- c. Maintain and enhance the website for increased messaging to the Association membership as well as develop new capabilities to enhance usage such as electronic directory, local maps, photo gallery, individual account management, etc.
- d. Continue the concept of Quarterly forums & meetings to discuss relevant information affecting the Community Members.
- e. Conduct periodic Meet and Greet with state and local politicians and school board candidates to educate our homeowners and convey to them the power of a voting block like Saw Creek.
- f. Ensure transparent communication between the Board, Committees, Management and Staff throughout the year.



Strategic Plan – September 2020

II. Community Governance and Management

Strategic Goal

Recommended actions that will serve to strengthen the Community Governance System and Management of the Saw Creek Estates Community Association.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Continue to adhere to CAI standards and practices on governance, conducting productive, focused, efficient & effective meetings with defined objectives and within a designated period.
- b. Ensure Standing Committees are more effective by clearly communicating the responsibilities and mission of each Standing Committee with respect to the Strategic Plan.
- c. Encourage inter department cooperation on all programs and activities to deliver seamless outstanding service to all members & guests.
- d. Explore options and implement where appropriate, changes in policy, services, rights and responsibilities, fees, and restrictions to differentiate goods and services provided to members, residents, tenants, and guests.
- e. Aggressively promote participation in community affairs, volunteerism, and governance and voter education to encourage more active participation among members.
- f. Increase representation of volunteers, renters, and newer members on Committees to identify opportunities and implement plans to provide a premier community experience for all members, guests, and families.
- g. Develop a program for which prospective Board members are identified, cultivated, and recruited, including a process, which helps them prepare for service on the Board.
- h. Adopt & implement standards of care throughout the Association to promote pride of the community



Strategic Plan – September 2020

III. Community Lifestyle

Strategic Goal

Promote community spirit through the development of programs engaging association members, volunteers, and guests to enhance the Saw Creek lifestyle.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Evaluate the quality and frequency of the recreation & safety programs currently being offered as well as the usage as a means of determining the programs that should be continued and new ones to be offered.
- b. Continue to leverage existing programs/events and facilities that are being offered by outside entities including Lehman and Middle Smithfield townships; Pike and Monroe County; PEEC; the National Park Service and others which Saw Creek Estates residents may avail themselves.
- c. Develop creative ways to involve the community of all members and guests in a diverse group of activities both in and around the community.
- d. Improve utilization and maximize availability of the common areas for the enjoyment of all members and guests. Look to development more passive recreation activities and amenities.
- e. Explore partnerships with student, business, social, civic, and charitable groups to perform at community events and provide cross-promotional opportunities.
- f. Actively explore, encourage, and promote the creation of clubs such as book, cooking, walking, chess, etc.
- g. Ensure staff and operational hours in tandem with community needs.
- h. Continue to focus on approaches to ensure every homeowners' right to peaceful enjoyment of their home and property.



Strategic Plan – September 2020

IV. Environmental Stewardship

Strategic Goal

Recommend actions that will preserve, protect, and provide for the continued health and enjoyment of the environment and natural resources within the community.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Create policies and standards to ensure that they remain consistent with Environmental Stewardship goals.
- b. When/wherever possible and economically practical, promote increased energy efficiency, lower carbon emissions and sustainable design and construction and other alternative energy sources, i.e., solar energy.
- c. Manage air, land, and water resources in a responsible manner, employing best practices when/where practical.
- d. Manage a healthy forest ecosystem through proactive forest management, wildlife management, control of pests and invasive species and conduct a study to improve Environmental Stewardship efforts and understanding of habitat, species, general conditions, and threats to our environment.
- e. Continue to educate the membership and promote community appreciation of Environmental Stewardship goals and objectives.
- f. Seek grants for environmental goals such as fire prevention, clean lakes, and streams.



Strategic Plan – September 2020

V. **Facilities & Amenities**

Strategic Goal

Upgrade and maintain existing amenities/facilities in a pristine manner as needed to accommodate changes in the use, size, and demographics of the Membership.

Recommended Actions:

Top of the World (TOW)

- a. Explore the feasibility of expanding hours at TOW amenities (pool & ski hill).
- b. Continue to investigate expanded uses of the ski hill in the off season.
- c. Implement technology efficiencies to enhance customer experience at the ski hill

Mill Pond Complex

VIP Area

- a. Planning for continued use of the VIP building and surrounding area and whether building renovation or replacement is more appropriate to meet the intended uses.
- b. Implement a timeline to have the new VIP building completed

Member Services

- a. Complete renovation of Member Services Office.
- b. Continue to find ways to streamline service delivery thru the use and implementation of new technology and automation

Public Safety

- a. Develop a plan to redesign the current facilities with a view towards their longer-term needs.
- b. Evaluate potential automation of patrol vehicle office capabilities.
- c. Research feasibility & costs of Act 120 for PS officers.



Strategic Plan – September 2020

Recycling

- a. Define plans, site requirements and operating SOP's.

IT

- a. Explore implementation/costs and feasibility of available technology to improve and streamline functionality & processes throughout the Association.



Strategic Plan – September 2020

VI. Financial

Strategic Goal

*Recommend actions that will serve to continue to strengthen the financial position of the
Saw Creek Estates Community Association*

Recommended Actions:

- a. Strive to ensure that the Reserve Funds are maintained at a sufficient level to avoid the need for special assessments to homeowners.
- b. Search for new ways to generate & capture revenue for our Community.
- c. Continue periodic review of Investment Manager Performance, asset allocation, and Board risk tolerance effort to maximize income to Saw Creek.
- d. Continue to explore the operation more efficient with a view towards outsourcing.
- e. Move forward with project to solicit change in covenants to allow for unit to common area proposal, which will allow for the sale of many lots currently owned by Saw Creek.
- f. Continue a plan to lower aged receivables.
- g. Maximize the distribution of the Capital Improvement Fund.
- h. Investigate the financial feasibility of purchasing adjacent properties when they come up for sale.



Strategic Plan – September 2020

VII. Marketing

Strategic Goal

Develop a marketing plan based on what attracts New Property Owners to Saw Creek Estates and How New Members can be recruited.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Continue working with the Marketing company to expand on key measurement tools of the program's success.
- b. On-going evaluation of the distribution of marketing funds by action item.

VIII. Relationship with Neighboring Communities

Strategic Goal

Develop a plan to strengthen the Community's relationship with other Planned Communities within 10 miles of Saw Creek Estates

Recommended Actions:

- a. Invite Managers and Board Members from other Planned Communities to an introductory luncheon. This could expand to regular meetings to share ideas, challenges and solutions and would serve as a means of introducing the Top of the World bar and restaurant to neighboring communities who might not be familiar with them.
- b. Discuss feasibility of shared services and bulk purchasing with other communities.



Strategic Plan – September 2020

IX. Restaurant

Strategic Goal

Act to streamline the operation of the private restaurant at Saw Creek Estates to establish better quality food with consistent service.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Provide a quality and affordable food and beverage operation in a friendly, social environment that caters primarily to the needs and interests of the Saw Creek Community
- b. Maintain a high-quality customer service experience between SCE Members, guests, and staff
- c. Continue to evaluate programs to encourage increase patronage
- d. Explore opportunities for expansion and/or redesign of TOW Restaurant and kitchen
- e. Explore other potential income producing or passive uses of restaurant facilities during off hours