

Saw Creek Estates

Strategic Plan – October 2022
Saw Creek Estates Community Association
Bushkill, Pennsylvania



Board of Directors:

Kathi Connell – President

Peggy Gottschau – Vice President

MJ Stigliano – Secretary

Pat Kirby – Treasurer

Christa Caceres – Director

Michael Derrenbacher – Director

John Graham – Director

Colette Levinstein – Director

John Raba – Director

Community Manager – Greg Trunzo, Taylor Management

Approved, October 8, 2022



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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.



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ADMINISTRATION

Management and Staff shall provide critical input to the Board to help manage the community and properly carry out 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.



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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.

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. The plan will be updated every 3-5 years, where applicable.



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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. Continue working with a professional marketing firm and staff with 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. Continue to increase electronic feasibility for association meetings and events and emergency notices.
- b. Creation of periodic survey to be developed by the designated marketing vendor approximately every three (3) years.
- c. Conduct periodic Meet and Greet with state and local politicians and school board candidates to educate our homeowners and residents and convey to them the power of a voting block like Saw Creek.
- d. Continue to expand internal and external communication over all platforms to better inform all members, guests, and employees, about community services, volunteer programs, security and safety, disaster and emergency preparedness, and other member information services.
- e. 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.
- f. Ensure transparent communication between the Board, Committees, Management, Staff, and members and guests throughout the year.
- g. On-going evaluation of the distribution of marketing funds by action item.



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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. Adopt and implement standards of care throughout the Association to promote pride of the community.
- b. Continue to create and maintain a communication platform to demonstrate clear communication and transparency among all employees, at all levels.
- c. Promote and encourage continuing education for employees and encourage employees to seek training that improves their service and succession planning.
- d. Continue to adhere to Community Association Institute (CAI) standards and practices on governance and conducting productive, focused, efficient and effective meetings with defined objectives and within a designated period.
- e. Ensure Standing Committees are more effective by clearly communicating the responsibilities and mission of the Board and each Standing Committee with respect to the Strategic Plan.
- f. Encourage inter-departmental cooperation on all programs and activities to deliver seamless outstanding service to all members and guests.
- g. 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.
- h. Aggressively promote participation in community affairs, volunteerism, and governance and voter education to encourage more active participation among members.
- i. Increase representation of external community relations, 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.



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- j. Develop a program for which prospective volunteers, Board members are identified, and recruited, including a process and orientation, which helps them prepare for service on committees and/or the Board.



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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 and participation in the recreation and safety programs currently being offered as well as the usage as a means of determining programs and newcomer welcoming activities that should be continued, all including attention to interests of both youth and adults.
- 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; The Pocono Environmental Education Center (PEEC); the National Park Service and others which Saw Creek Estates residents may avail themselves.
- c. Develop creative ways and implement current trends and technology to involve 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 inter-active amenities.
- e. Explore partnerships with student, business, social, civic, and charitable groups to perform at community events.
- f. Actively explore, encourage, and promote the creation of clubs such as book, cooking, walking, chess, etc.
- g. Provide cross-promotional, fundraising, and sponsorship revenue opportunities.
- h. Continue to focus on approaches to ensure every homeowner's right to peaceful enjoyment of their home and property.
- i. Encourage Public Safety involvement and activities to improve community safety and awareness.



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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. Ensure that policies and standards remain consistent with Environmental Stewardship goals, in alignment with the association’s approved plan.
- 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.
- 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. Planning and improvement of communications to continue provide educational classes, programs and seminars to promote community appreciation of Environmental Stewardship goals and objectives.
- f. Determine whether there are Federal or State funds or grants available to assist with forest control, fire suppression, emergency preparedness, etc.



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V. Facilities and 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 and community event plan coordination at TOW amenities (snack bar, pool, ski hill, etc.).
- b. Continue to investigate expanded uses of the ski hill in the off season, as driven by community and member feedback.

Mill Pond Complex

- a. Expand parking options to allow for overflow of parking.
- b. Research feasibility for expansion of focused events, passive recreation events and rentals.
- c. Develop a plan for use as an emergency community center.

Community Area (former VIP)

- a. Protect our investment and expand utilization and use of the Derrenbacher Community Center and surrounding common areas to meet the intended uses for guest services community events.
- b. Develop plan for use as an emergency community center.

Member Services

- a. Design and complete renovation of Member Services Office (Phase II).
- b. Continue to find ways to streamline service delivery thru the use and implementation of new technology and automation with expanding of secure community and member self-service technology.
- c. Plan and implement the creation of Guest Services vs. Member Services.



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Public Safety

- a. Evaluate and expand potential automation of patrol vehicle office capabilities.
- b. On-going communications of association rules and education of PS responsibilities.
- c. Continue community education of safety trends and regulations.

Recycling

- a. Continue to define and educate operating (in-house) SOPs for all departments.
- b. Expand community wide recycling operational days and hours.

IT

- a. Continue to explore implementation/costs and feasibility of available technology to improve and streamline functionality and processes throughout the Association.
- b. Expand Wi-Fi reliability and community bandwidth.



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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 and 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. Pursue aggressive legal efforts for collection of delinquent accounts.
- e. Explore the feasibility to purchase and market available lots from the repository.
- f. Allocating association expenses across amenities and common areas.
- g. Compare financials with like size communities.
- h. Streamline budget process for transparency and accuracy.
- i. Actively pursue cell tower long lease options and/or sale of tower.



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VII. 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 the townships and/or other communities.
- c. Planning of shared conferences for building of a network and friendship.



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VIII. Restaurant Operations

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. Explore opportunities for expansion and/or redesign of TOW Restaurant.
- d. Explore other potential income producing or passive uses of restaurant facilities during off hours.
- e. Provide members with a cost-effective discount program.