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the

Swann Keys

Newsletter, September 2015



What's a Wetland to You?

Did you know that just one acre of beautiful wetland can absorb up to 300,000 gallons of storm surge, protecting your property in a flood? Wetlands protect not just the property immediately adjacent to them but those in our entire community.

The easiest way to complete the Your Creek Survey is to go to www.inlandbays.org and click on Dirickson Creek Survey in the upper right hand corner. Sponsored by the Centers for the Inland Bays, the survey gives each of our residents in Swann Keys an opportunity to have your thoughts heard. Preliminary results indicate that as a community we love our creek for the recreational opportunities it provides like fishing and crabbing, boating, photography and wildlife.

Community News!

Email Addresses

Call or email Bev in the office & provide your email so the BOD can send you notices and updates.
302-436-5111

Pool Closes

At the end of Labor Day, Mon. Sept. 7th @ 8pm.
Thanks for a great season!

Office Hours

Off-season office hours are 9-2, M-F.
Need a house number? See Bev in the office.

Buffer, Filter, Habitat and View

If you moved here in the last 10-20 years you have probably seen lots of changes to the wetlands. Suffering from erosion, the wetlands can't adequately filter water around them leaving the creek muddy and silted-in by runoff from the tax ditches. The lack of underwater grasses has caused a precipitous decline in the blue crab population.

Every spring we have a dramatic algae bloom in our marina indicating the lack of oxygen in our canals. Without oxygen, plant and animal life can't survive in our waters. In addition, Delaware has designated Dirickson Creek a red zone due to high bacteria content where the oysters that filter the water have died off.

Of those Swann Keys residents who have submitted their surveys so far, results show that we are good observers. Besides silting and crab decline, our residents know that we need to plant native species, create a plant buffer between pavement and the water, dispose of pet waste in trash receptacles, and eliminate the use of pesticides and fertilizers. Our residents care about our environment and want to preserve it for future generations.



Bacteria in Creek Declines as Summer Progresses

How clean is our water? Enterococcus is bacteria found in the guts and feces of warm-blooded animals. Humans can acquire gastroenteritis from swimming or playing in fecal contaminated water. The west end of the creek near Double Bridges road was recently tested at 214 parts p/100miL. However, at Mulberry Landing, nearer the tidal waters of Little Assawoman Bay, the water had 14/100miL. The EPA allows 35 p/100miL in tidal waters. Our canals have little water exchange and would test on the higher end. Think about that before you take a splash in a canal or prepare to do any work.

Beyond the Survey

Is there a future for our creek? The CIB and Friends of Dirickson Creek unanimously shout out a big YES! But it takes each and every one of us to make a creek clean-up happen. You might hear a neighbor say, *“In ten years I probably won’t even be here. Why should I care?”* Or, *“I don’t live here full time. Not my problem.”* Or, *“What’s the Board of Directors doing to clean up the creek?”*

Answer these comments by saying that the canals and creek belong to all of us and will take all of us to conserve their beauty. Swann Keys has the greatest number of volunteers on the Your Creek Project compared to surrounding neighborhoods. Jump in and help them. Complete the survey. You bought your home to enjoy what this area has to offer. Don’t let it disappear.

Sally Boswell, Education and Outreach Coordinator for the CIB said, “What each person does, has impact because people want it, vote for it, stand up for it, and live for it.” The challenge, she said, is that older communities like ours were built before the storm water regulation, discharging non-point source water contamination into our canals and bays. Going forward, our community needs to have a unified vision of improvements that protect our canals and creeks.

The following is medical advice from those in the know. Protect a cut or open wound before you come in contact with water or mud, especially from our canals. Upon contact, treat the wound immediately with antibacterial wash and watch carefully for signs of infection. Contact your medical professional if necessary.

To get information on the Your Creek Project, contact Anna Vonlindenberg at bakvl123@gmail.com or follow on NextDoor



More Volunteers Saving Community \$\$\$

The Maintenance Committee has been hard at work giving our community center a facelift. Both porticos have been surfaced in vinyl siding, the windows and doors have been painted, caulked and oiled, and new exterior lights and receptacles have been added at the main door. The building exterior will be painted in the next two years and suggestions and plans for interior renovations are being gathered. The Putt Putt has been refurbished for the enjoyment of multiple generations of residents and guests. Five sewer lift stations have been power washed and cleaned and a new pump has been ordered to be professionally installed on Canvasback Road.

The Current Board of Directors

President: Bill DePuy
Vice President: George Kirkley
Treasurer: Sharon Fantini
Recording Secretary: Carol Harper
Corresponding Secretary: Kathy Berkheimer

Chuck Der	Dianna Shade
Mel Fetty	Tom Shamp
Bill Hutchison	Susie Smith
John McCamant	Ron Young
Richard Schofield	Ron Wells

SKNL Editor: Barbara Shamp

The Swann Keys water system was completely overhauled two years ago and is now state of the art. The lift stations on each street are on scheduled replacement insuring the same reliability for our community sewer system. The maintenance team does not anticipate a special assessment for either of these systems!

Delaware Electric Company will be installing LED street lights on existing poles at no cost to the community. This will update our look, reduce our electric costs and provide brighter electric service.

Bids are being accepted now for the paving of Blue Teal this fall and the remaining streets will be paved on a three to five year schedule. *Leave the first 5-10 feet of your property adjacent to the road a permeable surface. Property owners who pave this area will be financially responsible for excavation and repaving to find water line in an emergency.* If you decide to install a perforated pipe to take ponding road water across your property to empty into your canal, leave this surface permeable as well, adding a filter strip, or bioswale to absorb road contaminants that are toxic to our canals.

Go to the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension Lawn and Garden www.extension.udel.edu/extension to find out more about construction and native plants.

Maintenance has asked for the past year that our residents, guests and renters *do not, under any circumstances throw grease, diapers, mops, or cleaning wipes in your toilets as they clog up the lift stations leading to increased expenses for our community.* If you rent your home, year-round or seasonally, it's suggested that you include this information in the rental packet along with information about trash pick up times and the community rules for enjoying the good life in Swann Keys.

Clean Boating On Our Creek

The following is advice from the Delaware Centers for the Inland Bays on how to keep our waterways clean when boating.

While in the marina or at dock;

1. **Prevent spills during fueling** by not over filling the tank, capture spills with pads or vent attachments, install a fuel-air separator, and listen to the fill pipe instead of relying on the gauge.
2. **Keep your engine leak-free and well-tuned** to minimize discharge of fuel and oil into the water.
3. **Use an oil absorbent pad or pillow in the bilge to absorb oil.**
4. **Use biodegradable, environmentally safe detergents to clean your boat.**
5. **Use pumpout stations** to dispose of waste.

While on Dirickson Creek:

1. **Keep your boat off the bottom!** This risks damaging habitats like grasses that shelter and provide nursery areas for fin fish and shellfish. **Stay clear of underwater grasses.**
2. Observe speed limits. **Slow down as wake erodes shorelines.**
3. Respect the islands. **The islands in the bays are nesting areas for many birds, most of which are ground nesters.** They are safe from predators such as fox, cats, raccoons, and dogs. The nests are nearly invisible on the sand. If you do set foot on an island, watch where you put it. And keep your dog on the boat or at least on a leash.
4. **Carry out your trash.** Properly dispose of scrap fishing line, garbage, cigarette butts, and items for recycling ashore. **Birds are often entangled in abandoned fishing line and sea turtles mistake plastic bags for jellyfish.**

Parties in the Park

The Picnic in the Park was a rousing success again in its second year. About 280 residents and guests played Putt Putt, Pickle Ball, and rode the fire engine from Roxana Fire Department. Antique classic cars and a clown provided additional entertainment. Although it was a club sponsored event, most of the cost, including prizes for the children were covered by member donations. Country Side Cafe generously donated the chips. About 50 Swann Keys club members also donated their time and expertise to make another crowning summer event!

The Fourth of July celebration was also widely attended with the traditional boat parade in the morning followed by pit beef, games, and red, white and blue fun in the community center. All the ladies who volunteered got in the spirit wearing Fourth of July crab hats!



Letter from the President

This has been a great summer of fun and friends in Swann Keys. We have had numerous successful social events that have spread good will throughout the community. I know that this will continue throughout the rest of the year.

I would like to touch on some BOD initiatives that contribute to the excellent management of Swann Keys through our great spirit of volunteerism. One of our prime projects, spearheaded by George Kirkley, (Vice President) and Sharon Fantini, (Treasurer) has been revamping our Quick Books reporting making it more user-friendly.

As summer started, our pool opened through the hard work of Bill Hutchison, Ron Young and their Recreation Committee. Our Putt Putt repairs are complete making it again one of our most enjoyed amenities, thanks to Mel Fetty and Richard Schofield. In addition, upgrades to our Clubhouse and Hall entrances were made.

Chuck Der and the Beautification Committee have planted, painted, watered and pressure washed to improve the appearance of our community. We are continuing these projects and will pave one of our roads starting this fall.

Thanks to all of our volunteers for their hard work.

*Yours truly,
Bill DePuy*

If you wish to volunteer on any of the committees listed below, please contact the chairperson through the office.

Maintenance- Mel Fetty

Recreation- Bill Hutchison

ByLaws-George Kirkley

House- Kathy Berkheimer

Beautification- Chuck Der

Nominations or Insurance- John McCamant

Community Events

Updates on Info Board by Mailboxes

Ladies Auxiliary: \$12.00 membership.

Covered Dish Luncheon- Sept. 12th meeting.
New members welcome.

Walking- community center hall on M-W-F at 1:00.

Halloween Happy Hour- Sat., Oct. 31st from 5:00-7:30; wear a costume and be ready to compete for prizes!

Come to the Community Center to play billiards on Mondays from 1-3pm. You don't have to be an expert to play!

Play cards on Tuesdays from 7-9 pm.

New Years Eve Party- Dec. 31st Music by Bob Hughes; Cost \$25 p/p. wine, beer & soda; midnight coffee and donuts.

The Sports Club: \$20.00 membership.

Sept. 19th Pork Dinner/Bingo 5:30-10pm; all welcome; reservations req.

Sept. 22-3rd- Bus Trip to Gettysberg; all welcome; reservations req. \$125.00 p/p- dble occup. Includes bus, hotel, breakfast, guide on bus and entrance to Eisenhower Theatre. Call Eleanor by Sept. 8th.

Oct. 3rd-Crab Feast 5pm-8pm. Members only.

Oct. 16th-Italian dinner/Bingo. All welcome; reserv. req.

Nov. 21st-mtg. luncheon. Members only.

Dec. 12th- Christmas Party.





Making Us Beautiful!

We need to thank the Beautification Committee for landscaping the office entrance making it more inviting. To keep those tropical flowers in bloom requires watering every day and they are lovely! In addition, these folks have cleaned the entrance sign on Rt. 54 and planted the flowerpots

around the pool. They ask us

not to mow grass into the canals and to move old trash bins off the ROW on each street. We applaud their dedication. Thank you for being involved!



Jump into Fall

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