

## **From the Beach Committee**

*~Kate Penn, Beach Chair*

Another batch of new benches has been installed at the Beach. Thank you to all our donors and to Lee Ann Havard for her work on this project. There are also some new, matching trash and recycling cans installed by each pavilion and at the parking lot. Please be sure to make use of those recycling containers for cans and plastic containers.

A recent article in *The Capital* regarding the proposed State budget reported that funds have been budgeted for the Hillsmere Shores Shoreline Erosion Control Project. On the heels of the last few meetings, this information came as a surprise to many, including me. I reported at the January General Meeting that about two years ago, I met with DNR to discuss possible funding for shoreline restoration work. They offer a zero-interest loan program for structural work, and were very interested in working with us on the project. However, 75% of the community owners must agree to the creation of a Special Erosion Control Tax District, similar to the Special Tax District we currently operate under. As the community survey collected only a 68% response, the board agreed it would not be a practical undertaking.

If you have ever worked with any government funding or budgeting operation, you will understand that the process takes a couple years. The representative I was working with knew we were continuing to research options. He put the funding in his budget, so that it would be available if it turned out we could use it. This person acted with good intent, and with the interest of our community in mind. Regardless of what is set aside in the budget, however, we cannot access that loan program without creating the Erosion Control Tax District, which requires approval of 75% of the property owners.

At the January board meeting, I will present bids for the replacement of the wood bulkhead on the east (left) end of the beach. It has become a safety hazard, and the community has provided support of the project in prior years. The system will be replaced with either another wood bulkhead, a stone revetment, constructed of large, flat stones, or a combination of the two systems. The new system will be installed around the existing bulkhead. The board budgeted \$60,000 for this project to be completed during this current fiscal year. The only section that we will be addressing is the area at the wood bulkhead, as the rest can wait for further study and deliberation. Details of the bids, and the board's selection, will be presented on the web site after the board meeting. If you would like a paper copy of that information, or any other details about the shoreline planning process, please contact the HSIA voice mail at 410-263-4456 and the information will be sent to you.

At the January General Meeting, I reminded everyone present that the Beach Committee will take a six month study period for further shoreline remediation planning. I also provided some background on my research over the past two years. We then had an hour of questions and comments. There were a lot of good suggestions, and as we continue our work over the next few months, I will report our progress here in *the Sea Breeze*, as

well as on the HSIA web site. Please be patient with us, as the Beach Committee is made up of volunteers who also have jobs and families.

The Beach Committee has a number of new members, and appears to provide a good representation of the diverse view of our community. During the study period, we will evaluate the off-shore conditions, such as currents and sediment levels, look at how the different available methods of erosion controls meet our needs, and continue to gather community input on the process.

One request we received was to provide a list of the current and projected problems with the shoreline, evidence of those problems, a list of possible systems for solving the problems (including the costs), and the expected outcomes of whichever solutions are put in place.

The Beach Committee is working to provide a fact sheet with that information. As a start, the current conditions and projected problems at our beach are described below, along with the objectives of the restoration planning to remediate those problems. The fact sheet that we develop will provide information on the potential systems to address these issues and a cost-benefit analysis of each alternative. This will provide a starting place for discussion and recommendations, as we work together on a plan to make the beach something we can all enjoy for many years.

## **Summary of Shoreline Conditions and Objectives of Long-term Plan**

### **I. Current Shoreline Conditions/Potential Problems for further consideration**

- A. Wood bulkhead on east (left) end is deteriorated and requires immediate improvement.
  - Evidence: holes in wood; deep sink holes behind wall
- B. Overgrowth of the invasive reed Phragmites in small beach at far east (left)
  - Evidence: unsightly, tall grasses block water views; non-native plants are invasive and can inhibit growth of important native plants.
- C. Beach in swim area is eroding
  - Evidence: aerial photos and surveys (will be posted on web site)
- D. Concrete bulkhead shows signs of deterioration
  - Evidence: bowing along wall; crumbling & cracks in concrete
- E. Corrugated metal bulkhead (right of swim area) shows signs of deterioration
  - Evidence: holes in metal; sink holes beginning to develop behind wall
- F. Unprotected beach at west end (right) is eroding into path
  - Evidence: aerial photos and surveys; maintenance of path required in recent years, including clearing sand and restoring base that was undercut by storm activity.

### **II. Objectives of Shoreline Design**

- A. As set by the HSIA Board of Directors:
  - 1. Preserving the swim area
  - 2. Maintaining erosion controls

3. Beach preservation
4. Water clarity
5. Environmental compatibility
6. Create long-term plan for preserving shoreline

B. As voiced in community meetings/feedback thus far:

1. Increasing sandy areas
2. Preserving Bay views
3. Increasing beach safety by removing walls and stone from shoreline
4. Preserving current recreational activities
5. Protecting migratory swans and other aquatic life