

Petition to Dredge the Waterway from Connecting Lagoons of Atlantic Street and the Southern End of Schulz Road in the Town of Fenwick Island to the Existing "Ditch" Waterway at the Route 54 Bridge in the Little Assawoman Bay

Local property owners are seeking your support to sign a petition to request the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) and the Town of Fenwick Island dredge the waterway from connecting lagoons of Atlantic Street and the southern end of Schulz Road in the Town of Fenwick Island to the existing "Ditch" waterway at the Route 54 Bridge in the Little Assawoman Bay.

History:

The water depth in the lagoon area between Atlantic Street and Shultz Road over to "the Ditch" in Little Assawoman Bay has considerably lessened over the past 25+ years, become increasingly shallow and making it more dangerous to navigate motorized watercraft. Not only does this pose a risk to motorized watercraft, but it also creates a safety concern for those operating nonmotorized watercraft given the lack of an appropriate channel marker and the need for motorized watercraft to use greater power to navigate the channel.

This problem was first identified and brought to the attention of DNREC by Fenwick Island resident Bill Weistling in March of 1997. The response from DNREC in April of that year was as follows: "We believe we will receive additional requests to perform dredging of the other connecting lagoons in the future. With this in mind, we would like to take a comprehensive look at the area as a whole. This will involve conducting a bathymetric survey of the area to determine actual dredging needs and quantities, locating suitable disposal facilities for the dredged material, and discussing the proposal with State and local elected officials to determine if there is support for the project. If this reconnaissance indicates that a project is warranted, then we will work with the elected officials to develop and implement the endeavor." Twenty years later, this situation, which was problematic then and has significantly increased in severity, still has not been addressed.

Proposed Solution:

Mr. Weistling and fellow neighbors, some of whom have engineering backgrounds, evaluated the costs of dredging a channel and have identified potential solutions. Options include:

1. Since the middle of the bay has already filled in to the point of creating an island, (albeit it underwater at high tide, contributing to the safety issue), one option would be to blow the sand onto this island to create a nature sanctuary, much like the dredging project in Ocean City accomplished.
2. Another option would be to rebuild the spoils of Seal Island, which is a little further north and which has eroded. Pumping the sand onto an island would eliminate the need to truck the sand to a different location, and reduce the cost of dredging significantly. It would also create a sanctuary for wildlife, and improve safety to all recreational boaters.

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How to Help:

We are soliciting the support of the citizens in this area of Fenwick Island to enable us to better approach DNREC and our local officials. Please sign and return the attached petition. If we are successful in having area leading to the "Ditch" dredged, the Little Assawoman Bay will become a safer place for all boaters, and property values for Fenwick Islanders will be maintained.

Please return this petition to Karin Lakin at klakin@seniornetwork.org or fax it to (301) 970-2459. The Lakin family has owned a home in Fenwick Island, at 15 West Bayard Street Extension for 54 years. It is our desire to preserve waterway access and improve safety for future generations to come. If you would like additional information on our progress, please make sure to provide me with your email address when you return the petition.

WHEREAS, The citizens of Fenwick Island have purchased property on the island for the purposes of accessing and enjoying the waterways;

WHEREAS, The waterway noted above has filled in, making it too shallow for power boats to safely navigate across without accelerating to top speed;

WHEREAS, The waterway noted above does not have a marked channel and is utilized by paddle boarders, kayakers, and other small watercraft, creating a significant safety concern for both recreational users of non-motorized watercraft as well as motorized watercraft; and

WHEREAS, If not addressed, this water way will soon be unusable by boat owners whose property is located in these areas, causing land values to drop.

RESOLVED, The Department of Natural Resources and the City of Fenwick shall dredge the waterway to a sufficient depth to allow motorized watercraft to safely navigate; and

RESOLVED, The Department of Natural Resources and the City of Fenwick shall appropriately mark the channel to identify it for both motorized and non- motorized watercraft.

I support the dredging and creation of a channel to enhance the safety of the Little Assawoman Bay.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Fenwick Island Address

Email Address (optional)

Phone Number (optional)