

# RICHMOND POND ASSOCIATION

## ANNUAL REPORT - 2025

The RPA met monthly using the Zoom format from April through October. The RPA's annual meeting was held August 26th, in person, at the Town Hall. The attendees enjoyed a root beer social prior to the meeting and heard reports on initiatives of the past year. Brittany Ebeling from Berkshire Environmental Action Team was a guest speaker. She discussed the impact trout stocking has on our environment.

Progress has been made with securing the needed permits for weed management with the Town of Richmond and the City of Pittsfield. The new permit will include herbicide treatment, weed harvesting and an annual 2 foot drawdown. In December, both Pittsfield and Richmond passed the Certificates of Compliance for the Orders of Conditions filed previously. This allowed for the combined aquatic vegetation management for Richmond Pond's Notices of Intent (NOIs) to be accepted and the new Orders of Conditions drafted by both Richmond and Pittsfield to be approved. We are now on track to treat the invasive weed species in our lake for the first time since 2021. Bruce Wintman, an active member of the RPA and an alternate for Whitewood, was instrumental in this process. The cost of weed treatments have increased dramatically since the Pond was last treated. We were fortunate to obtain a generous grant which will help with the cost of the treatment when it is scheduled and completed this year.

The Town has purchased a boat wash station for the boat ramp. They are waiting for approval from the State to move ahead with the needed permits but are hopeful it will be in place for 2026. There are new zebra mussel signs at the boat ramp and a certificate of decontamination must be signed every time a boat is launched. The RPA has plans to purchase signs for the communities around the Pond.

RPA officer elections were held in the fall. Re-elected were Louise Brogan as vice president, Laura Rosenthal as treasurer, Jonna Gaberman as the assistant treasurer and Doreen Donovan as secretary. The elections concluded with a continued vacancy for the role of president. We are always looking to grow our association and encourage anyone who is interested in joining the RPA to contact one of the board members. The contact information is on the RPA website.

### Ongoing:

- All beaches were tested weekly by their contracted agencies, for E.coli. There were no reports of elevated E.coli levels.
- Cyanobacteria testing was done bi-weekly by the Lakes & Ponds Association of Western MA, paid for by the RPA. Paul Neumann coordinated the schedule and the volunteers. The levels for cyanobacteria had been below the state threshold throughout the spring and summer testing. An algae bloom was reported in October. Ongoing monitoring is again planned for 2026. We know that high phosphates and nitrogen will promote weed growth. Berkshire Regional Planning Commission continues to advise us on grant opportunities that will benefit the health of the Pond.
- The Town funded and managed the public boat ramp monitors. They were able to staff the boat ramp from 6am-6pm, 7 days a week. The beach opened without a lifeguard and the gate was locked at 6 pm. The deteriorated handicap access mat into the swim area has not been removed.

The Town acquired handicap chairs to assist people to access the water. The user is required to call Town Hall to reserve the chair and to have the storage shed unlocked.

- The RPA has helped to subsidize educational opportunities with Richmond School. This program has grown under the guidance of Louise Brogan and 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher Gill Romano. A field trip to Richmond Pond will be an annual event for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade class and each previous 4<sup>th</sup> grade class will continue to be included. The students created signs with pictures they drew that they placed around the Pond. The signs included QR codes that discussed the Pond and a song that they made with the help of ChatGPT.
- Camp Arrow Wood hosted 120 campers for their sport sessions. Their enrollment continues to grow every year. Camp Russell hosted 350 campers per week for their camp sessions.
- The Richmond Pond history book has sold over 600 copies. There is a limited supply for sale at Bartlett's
- The RPA website is regularly updated. Bruce Wintman is managing the RPA website. He has updated the calendar and added live links. We continue to host a Facebook page.
- The annual "*Developments at Richmond Pond*" funding solicitation newsletter was distributed by mail in July. Your contributions are gratefully accepted and allow us to continue our mission of keeping Richmond Pond healthy and available for all to enjoy.

*Respectfully submitted,*

**Louise Brogan**, Vice President

**Laura Rosenthal**, Treasurer

**Jonna Gaberman**, Assistant Treasurer

**Doreen Donovan**, Secretary