



THE DAM NEWSLETTER

A PUBLICATION OF THE FRIENDS OF RAYSTOWN LAKE

SUMMER 2025 + ISSUE 1 + VOL 33



Summer 2025

Summer is in full swing, and we're excited to share what the Friends of Raystown Lake have been up to! Thanks to your support, our Navigation Light Campaign was completed, making the lake safer for everyone on the water (see pg. 2).

We're thrilled to welcome our summer interns (see pg. 3). Our RayCEP interns are already hard at work providing fun, hands-on environmental programs across the region (see pg. 6).

We've launched Raystown Wildlife Watch, a citizen science project where visitors can help document local wildlife sightings (see pg. 8). Habitat work continues as well, with volunteers building fish structures to improve aquatic ecosystems (see pg. 7).

We've also started a new bike club—RAMBO (Raystown Area Mountain Bike Organization)—to better support the Allegrippis Trail System (see pg. 4).

Thank you for being part of our mission to protect, enhance, and enjoy Raystown Lake. We hope to see you out on the trails, on the water, or in the wild this summer!

**FRIENDS OF
RAYSTOWN LAKE
P.O. BOX 87
HESSTON, PA 16647**

Board of Directors

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Cooperative Agency
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,
Raystown Lake Project
6145 Seven Points Road
Hesston, PA 16647



Operations Manager
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Lighting the Way

It's hard to believe it's been a year since we launched our fundraising campaign to replace the aging shoreline navigation lights on Raystown Lake. For years, these lights had been guiding boaters safely across the lake, but time had taken its toll. Some of the lights, obscured by overgrowth, were hard to spot, and others had simply failed, leaving stretches of the shoreline in the dark. Their deterioration meant that boaters were navigating in conditions that weren't as safe or secure as they should have been.

To make this vision a reality, we launched a sponsorship program allowing businesses to directly contribute to the safety and enhancement of the lake. Through this program, sponsors had the opportunity to adopt specific lights along the shoreline, ensuring their names would be proudly displayed as part of the upgraded system.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our community, we were able to successfully secure sponsorships for all 37 shoreline lights.

To learn more about our campaign success and view the full list of sponsors, visit friendsofraystownlake.com/the-dam-blog/f/lighting-the-way-a-year-in-review-of-our-nav-light-campaign



President's Post



BY MIKE TOME, PRESIDENT

As the seasons shift and summer activity hits full swing here at Raystown Lake, I'm filled with gratitude for the energy and dedication that surrounds our mission. The Friends of Raystown Lake have had a vibrant and productive few months, and it's exciting to see so many of our efforts coming to life across Raystown Lake.

First, let's give a warm welcome to our RayCEP interns, who join us for another season of environmental programming around Raystown Lake.

Another major highlight: after several years, DirtFest has returned to the Allegrippis Trails! With hundreds of riders, the weekend was a clear success. It reminded us just how special Raystown Lake and the Allegrippis Trails are. We're grateful to everyone who worked behind the scenes to help us bring this event to life. The momentum didn't stop there. We're proud to announce the launch of RAMBO—the Raystown Area Mountain Bike Organization.

Of course, none of these accomplishments would be possible without the support of our members. While your membership dues are vital, additional donations play a crucial role in advancing both current initiatives and future plans, including an exciting effort to protect the Putt's Camp shoreline. Every contribution makes a difference!

-Mike Tome

Meet Our Interns

Each summer, Friends of Raystown Lake USACE, and Juniata College welcome a pair of interns as part of the Raystown Conservation Education Program (RayCEP). These students gain valuable hands-on experience by leading engaging programs for visitors and community members across the region. This unique opportunity allows them to deepen their understanding of conservation education while actively supporting our mission to inspire environmental stewardship.

In addition to our RayCEP interns, the US Army Corps of Engineers welcomes two Student Conservation Association (SCA) interns

These students are more than just helpers. They're part of the team, contributing to meaningful projects that support our mission and enhance the visitor experience at Raystown Lake.

To learn more about our interns, check out friendsofraystownlake.com/the-dam-blog



Rilee Connors
RayCEP Intern



Ryann Pope
RayCEP Intern



Natalie Cook
SCA Water Safety Intern



Isabella Whitsel
SCA Natural Resource Intern

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RAMBO

There's a new group on the trail scene at Raystown Lake, and they're ready to roll. The Raystown Area Mountain Bike Organization—or RAMBO for short—is a newly formed volunteer club dedicated to supporting and improving mountain biking in the Raystown Lake Region.

Founded in 2025 under the umbrella of the Friends of Raystown Lake, RAMBO brings together riders, trail advocates, and outdoor enthusiasts who care deeply about the land, the sport, and the community that makes it all possible. Their mission is clear: to maintain and enhance the world-renowned Allegrippis Trails, while fostering a positive, inclusive, and sustainable biking culture.

The Allegrippis Trail System, with over 30 miles of purpose-built, flowy singletrack, brings in bikers from across the country. But behind every great trail system is a crew of dedicated individuals keeping it ride-ready. That's where RAMBO steps in. The club will volunteer trail workdays to address erosion, clear debris, and make improvements like signage and trail features. These efforts ensure that the trails remain safe, fun, and accessible for all levels of riders.

But RAMBO isn't just about shovels and dirt. It's about building community—on and off the trails. The group plans to host group rides to connect riders of all ages and abilities. RAMBO also aims to collaborate with land managers and local partners to advocate for new riding opportunities and sustainable trail expansion on the Allegrippis Trail System.



Whether you're a seasoned shredder, a weekend warrior, or a beginner just getting your wheels under you, RAMBO welcomes you. You don't need to be a trail-building expert or have the fanciest bike—just a love for the outdoors and a willingness to be part of something bigger. Volunteering can mean digging during a workday, helping at an event, or simply showing up to ride and share in the stoke.

Ready to ride with RAMBO? Learn more about the group and how to get involved by visiting friendsofraystownlake.com/rambo. Whether you're looking to give back, find your people, or just have fun on two wheels—RAMBO is ready to welcome you to the crew.

DISC GOLF UPGRADES

Disc golf at Raystown Lake has seen a wave of improvements thanks to the ongoing efforts of Raystown Area Discgolf. Both the Pine 9 and Ravine 18 courses have received upgrades aimed at enhancing playability, safety, and fun for players of all experience levels.

On the Ravine 18, players will now find permanent tee signage installed at every tee pad. The course also received new benches in key locations, offering players a spot to rest or reset during their round. And as a final flourish, a permanent brick island was installed on hole 18, creating a clearly defined landing zone and elevating the challenge of the final hole.

Over on the Pine 9, a creative and playful feature has been added to every tee post: spinner wheels. These spinners offer randomized prompts to shake up your round. Whether it's a tricky throw, a fun restriction, or a unique twist, it's sure to keep things interesting.

And the momentum isn't slowing down. More changes are on the horizon, promising to make the courses at Seven Points better than ever!



Membership Application

Please complete this application and send it along with a check payable to:

Friends of Raystown Lake
PO Box 87
Hesston, PA 16647

Check One:

☐ **New Member** ☐ **Renewal**

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Friend (65+): | \$ 10/yr |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Friend: | \$ 20/yr |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Friend: | \$ 25/yr |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Club / Organization Friend: | \$ 50/yr |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business / Corporate Friend: | \$ 100/yr |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime Friend: | \$ 500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Donation Amount: | \$ _____ |
| | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter (emailed): | \$0/yr |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter (mailed): | +\$5/yr (for S&H) |

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

**Scan for online
membership form**



Membership Reminder

Please consider your **2025** membership! Our memberships are set up on a calendar basis—January through December. The bulk of our operating budget comes from membership fees. Please help to keep FRL strong and renew your membership today!

RayCEP Programs

This summer, the Raystown Conservation Education Partnership (RayCEP) returns with a full lineup of free, family-friendly programs:

Birds of Prey

Thursday, July 3rd, 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Huntingdon Farmers' Market

Come hang out with RayCEP and learn about some of Pennsylvania's coolest predators!

Bald Eagles

Friday, July 4th, 7:00 p.m.

Raystown Lake Visitor Center

Celebrate the Fourth of July by soaring into the world of eagles! Get up close with a life-sized eagle's nest replica and uncover the fascinating lives of these national icons.

Cave Exploration

Thursday, July 10th, 1:00 p.m.

Huntingdon County Library

Get ready for an afternoon of adventure with RayCEP as we discover the wonders of caves!

Cave Exploration

Friday, July 11th, 7:00 p.m.

Raystown Lake Visitor Center

Get ready for an evening of adventure with RayCEP as we discover the wonders of caves!

Reptiles - A Scaly Conversation

Thursday, July 17th, 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Huntingdon Farmers' Market

Slither, crawl, and splash into the world of Pennsylvania's reptiles!

Reptiles - A Scaly Conversation

Friday, July 18th, 7:00 p.m.

Raystown Lake Visitor Center

Slither, crawl, and splash into the world of Pennsylvania's reptiles!

Program TBD

Thursday, July 24th, 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Huntingdon Farmers' Market

Program TBD

Friday, July 25th, 7:00 p.m.

Raystown Lake Visitor Center

Aquatic Invaders

Thursday, July 31st, 1:00 p.m.

Huntingdon County Library

Dive into the world of aquatic ecosystems with RayCEP as they spotlight the invasive species making waves in Raystown Lake.

Aquatic Invaders

Friday, August 1st, 7:00 p.m.

Raystown Lake Visitor Center

Dive into the world of aquatic ecosystems with RayCEP as they spotlight the invasive species making waves in Raystown Lake.

Program TBD

Thursday, August 7th, 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Huntingdon Farmers' Market

Program TBD

Friday, August 8th, 7:00 p.m.

Raystown Lake Visitor Center

Program TBD

Thursday, August 14th, 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Huntingdon Farmers' Market

Program TBD

Friday, August 15th, 7:00 p.m.

Raystown Lake Visitor Center



RayCEP

Raystown Conservation Education Partnership

PSBA Spawning

The Pennsylvania Striped Bass Association (PSBA) recently reported that young striped bass fry are once again growing in the organization's pond located in Lancaster County. These fry are the result of a successful spawning of one female this season and are currently being raised in a natural pond environment. Once the fish reach a size of approximately 4 to 5 inches, they will be returned to Raystown Lake for stocking.

This year's spawning season presented several challenges. Due to persistent rain and high water levels at Raystown Lake, PSBA had difficulty collecting enough spawning fish. Under normal conditions, the association aims to spawn six females each spring; however, only one female was successfully spawned in 2025.

Congratulations to the Pennsylvania Striped Bass Association on their success, and thank you for your continued dedication to enhancing and sustaining the striped bass population at Raystown Lake.

Fish Structures

Due to the construction of Raystown, the shoreline areas are devoid of native aquatic vegetation. To help support native fish populations, structures are built and placed to imitate a natural aquatic setting. Back in April, Friends of Raystown Lake joined staff from USACE and PA Fish & Boat Commission, and volunteers from Juniata College and Energy Transfer to construct 80 catfish boxes. These boxes were placed throughout Raystown Lake, and will give the catfish protected places to spawn.





Raystown Wildlife Watch

Friends of Raystown Lake invites you to explore, discover, and help protect the incredible wildlife of the Raystown Lake Project with *Raystown Wildlife Watch*!

This new initiative from the Friends of Raystown Lake, in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, encourages visitors and locals alike to observe, document, and share wildlife sightings at Raystown Lake. Using iNaturalist, participants can submit photos and details of what they encounter.

Raystown Lake is home to an incredible range of lifeforms.

By keeping an eye out and sharing what you find, you help park staff better understand the health of local ecosystems. Plus, you inspire others to care about and protect the natural world around them. For more details and to get involved, scan the QR code



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