



THE DAM NEWSLETTER

A PUBLICATION OF THE FRIENDS OF RAYSTOWN LAKE

WINTER 2025 + ISSUE 1 + VOL 35



Winter 2025

As winter settles in at Raystown Lake, Friends of Raystown Lake is excited to share what's ahead—and reflect on all we've accomplished together. In this issue, you'll find details on upcoming winter and early-spring events, a look back at RAMBO's impressive 2025 accomplishments on the trails, and important information for the year ahead.

LIFE JACKET REMINDER

A disproportionate number of boating fatalities occur during the months of November through April in Pennsylvania and cold water is one of the primary reasons.

Follow the law for Cold Weather Life Jacket Wear:

Boaters are **required by law** to wear life jackets on boats less than 16 feet in length or any canoe, kayak or paddleboard from November 1 through April 30.

For more information, visit the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's website



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

Board of Directors

President + Michael Tome
Vice President + Rod Donaldson
Secretary + Hanah Thatcher
Treasurer + Wayne Hearn

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



Operations Manager

Allen Gwinn

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Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars for upcoming events with the Friends of Raystown Lake and our partners organizations!

February 7: Frosty Fairways

Location: Oak Peninsula

April 15: Fish Structure Building

Location: TBD

May: Cleanup Day

Location: TBD

May 15-17: DirtFest 2026

Location: Susquehannock Campground, Allegrippis Trail System

Check our Facebook for more information



President's Post

BY MIKE TOME, PRESIDENT

As we say goodbye to 2025 and welcome in 2026, it's a good time to reflect on Friends of Raystown Lake's accomplishments and to look forward to the possibilities the new year will bring. Throughout the past year, the FRL have made significant progress in supporting our environmental education and stewardship mission.

One of our major achievements was hosting another successful Lake Cleanup Day, allowing us to maintain the natural beauty and health of Raystown Lake. Additionally, Fish Structure Day continued to improve the aquatic habitat. FRL also provided valuable support to our RayCEP interns for another summer, even as we overcame the challenge of the closure of the Seven Points Campgrounds.

The Allegrippis Trail System saw substantial benefits this year as well. The revitalization of the DirtFest mountain bike festival brought renewed energy to the trails, and the formation of the Raystown Area Mountain Bike Organization (RAMBO) promises even greater stewardship and community involvement in the future. Putt's Camp experience increased usage and revenue, and we hope that the new online reservation system will continue to build on that.

In 2026, we plan to build on these successes by making our events even more impactful and continuing our commitment to environmental causes around Raystown Lake. Our focus will remain on fostering stewardship, expanding educational opportunities, and enhancing the recreational experiences we offer to the community.

As you are well aware, these accomplishments are only possible through the dedication and support of our members, volunteers, and donors. We always have room for more involvement and resources to help the Friends of Raystown Lake thrive. As you consider your plans for the upcoming year, we invite you to reflect on how you might contribute to making our organization even more successful.

Here's to a happy and successful 2026!

-Mike Tome

USACE Partnerships and Volunteers Photo Contest

The USACE Partnership Advisory Committee has launched a photo contest for 2025 focused on partnerships and volunteer programs. The goal is to develop a collection of great photos that capture a sense of partnership, collaboration, and accomplishment which can be used in various publications, presentations, websites, social media, etc. There are 4 categories of photos for the contest:

- + Environmental Stewardship Partnerships
 - + Recreation Partnerships
 - + Volunteers in Action
- + Special Events with Partners

To learn more, visit <https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/partners/photo.cfm>

1% for the Planet

In a meaningful step toward expanding our impact, Friends of Raystown Lake (FRL) has joined 1% for the Planet, a global network that connects environmental nonprofits with individuals and businesses committed to environmental causes. The 1% for the Planet model is simple and effective: members pledge at least 1% of their annual sales or income to approved environmental partners, with all donations certified and tracked to ensure transparency and accountability.

As an environmental partner, FRL is recognized for its work in conservation, and environmental education at Raystown Lake. This partnership helps elevate FRL's local stewardship efforts by increasing visibility and strengthening connections with environmentally conscious supporters around the world.

Through this network, FRL gains new opportunities to amplify its mission and support ongoing efforts to protect Raystown Lake's natural resources.



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RAMBO Recap

As we wrap up 2025, RAMBO is proud to reflect on an incredibly productive inaugural half-year since officially organizing in June. Thanks to the dedication of our members, friends, and volunteers, we've logged more than 450 volunteer hours focused on keeping the Allegrippis Trails safe, sustainable, and enjoyable for all.

Our work concentrated on critical trail maintenance, including clearing brush, limbs, and downed trees after frequent summer and fall wind events. Volunteers corrected drainage issues, realigned sections impacted by erosion, filled holes left by uprooted trees, and addressed exposed roots along the trail surface. We also cleared brush and cut trees to support the Upper Corners parking lot expansion, a collaborative project with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that will nearly triple parking capacity.

Additional highlights include cutting in the Hydro Loop mooring access trail for bike-to-boat access and becoming an official IMBA affiliate. We also began early conversations with PICL and community partners about launching a middle and high school mountain bike team.

Looking ahead, RAMBO will focus on upgrading trail signage and preparing for DirtFest 2026—our biggest event of the year!



Want to support our efforts? Consider becoming a member of RAMBO!



RAMBO membership is separate from the FRL membership, and goes directly towards maintaining and improving the Allegrippis Trail System

2025 Wheelin' Sportsmen

This year marked the 25th anniversary of the **Chris Bowser Wheelin' Sportsmen Hunt**. Hunters were strategically placed throughout three "No Hunting" areas (Dam, Seven Points, and Field Station). Twenty-eight hunters participated in the event and harvested eight deer. After the hunt concluded, everyone gathered at the Smithfield Fire Hall to enjoy a meal and time of fellowship.

Friends of Raystown Lake was recognized during a short presentation for sponsoring a hunting blind, and FRL secretary Hanah Thatcher was presented with a banner

Since the program's inception over 109 hunters have participated and more than 200 deer have been harvested.



Friends of Raystown Lake
P.O. Box 87
Hesston, PA 16647

