



THE DAM NEWSLETTER

A PUBLICATION OF THE FRIENDS OF RAYSTOWN LAKE

SUMMER 2020+ ISSUE 3+ VOL 24



SUMMER 2020

Despite the ongoing challenges presented by COVID-19, Raystown Lake once again had a successful recreation season. The inability to travel far from home combined with a general sense of cabin fever and excellent weather meant that visitation to natural areas like Raystown increased significantly this summer, as evidenced by the fact that boat launches and campgrounds were at 100% capacity almost every weekend!

Fortunately the Friends were able to have monthly meetings again beginning in July in a new temporary location at the Raystown Lake Visitor Center. If you have not yet heard, the Friends are receiving a pontoon boat as a generous donation from Energy Transfer (SUNOCO) (see New Pontoon Boat article). Despite the RayCEP program not being a possibility this summer, the Corps supplemented with 3 new weekly outdoor programs, including Beginner Kayaking, Yoga at the Lake and Nature Scavenger Hunts. Additionally, summer amphitheater concerts and some other events, such as Chalk the Walk, continued as usual, which offered some sense of normalcy and reprieve from this stressful time.

As we look toward the Fall months, the Friends are planning to begin trail improvements on the Terrace Mountain Trail in partnership with the Friends of Trough Creek/Warriors Path. The Allegrippis Trails have also been incredibly busy this summer and trail maintenance has been ongoing (see Allegrippis Action article). The Corps is also planning a small-group cleanup event in light of the annual Lake Cleanup in the spring being cancelled. Keep an eye on the Friends of Raystown Lake Facebook page and website for information on volunteer opportunities at these events.

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

Board of Directors

President + Ron Rabena
Vice + Leslie Leckvarcik
Secretary + Valerie Robbins-Rice
Treasurer + Wayne Hearn

Cooperative Agency
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,
Raystown Lake Project
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Hesston, PA 16647
(814) 658-3405



Park Manager
Jude Harrington

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SUMMER 2020 HIGHLIGHTS REEL



Above: Ranger reopening the Mountain Biking Skills Park on June 3rd



Above: A visitor creating a water safety message at the 9th Annual Chalk the Walk. Select prizes for winners were donated by the Friends of Raystown!



Above: Park Ranger Paige Hollibaugh (former 2019 RayCEP intern) at the Visitor Center Nature Scavenger Hunt.



Above: Volunteer Mary Jo teaching beginner kayaking at Seven Points Beach.



Above: Monarch caterpillars at the Visitor Center



Above: Chris Westfall at the Seven Points Amphitheater on July 18th



Captain's Quarters

BY RON RABENA, PRESIDENT



As September approaches, things are beginning to slow down at Raystown Lake. It has certainly been a very strange year with the virus, shutdowns, social distancing and masks. Friends of Raystown Lake got a few of their events in towards the end of the summer. The Allegrippis trails and the Mountain Bike Skills park were reopened in late June and are in reasonable shape due to limitations on getting numbers of people out to do trail work. The fall season is on the horizon and Raystown Lake will have hopefully some nice colors of leaves despite the dry conditions. Hunting seasons will be starting soon as well so please wear orange on the bike trails and boat safely!

PONTOON BOAT

The Friends of Raystown Lake were recently able to obtain a pontoon boat from Energy Transfer (SUNOCO) which will help the Friends accomplish various tasks and projects at Raystown. At the conclusion of their drilling operations at Raystown, SUNOCO was no longer in need of the pontoon boat to complete underwater pipeline inspection, so they generously donated the boat to the Friends. The 20 foot, 10-person capacity Godfrey Sweetwater pontoon boat will be stored at the Raystown Lake Field Station and used in partnership with Juniata College.

Right: Actual photo of Ron Rabena in new pontoon boat anxiously awaiting the arrival of 2021 Raystown Lake Cleanup Day.

Lake Cleanup
Day 2021-
Here we come!



The Friends will be able to use this boat for a variety of purposes, including the annual Raystown Lake Cleanup Day, fish structure building, navigation light maintenance, water safety promotion, aquatic surveys and research, etc. If you have other creative projects or ideas about how you would like to see the boat used at Raystown, please submit your thoughts to Ron, rabena1@verizon.net!

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **RIVER CLEANUP: Sept 26th-** Help us celebrate National Public Lands day with this small group river cleanup on the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River. Call Park Ranger Jenna Conner at 814-658-6811 for more info.



- **WHEELIN' SPORTSMEN HUNT: Dec 12th-** Organized by the Terrace Mountain Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation in cooperation with the US Army Corps of Engineers, the Wheelin' Sportsmen hunt enables individuals with disabilities to get out and enjoy a free hunt in some of Raystown Lake Project's prime locations. For more information on the hunt or to apply for the 2020 Wheelin' Sportsmen Hunt, call (814) 658-6813.



- **FRL MEETINGS:** The Friends of Raystown Lake will hold monthly board meetings on Thursdays, September 10, October 8 and November 12. Meetings will begin at 7:00 pm. Held at the Raystown Lake Visitor Center.

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

- ☐ New Member ☐ Renewal
- ☐ Special Friend \$500 (lifetime)
- ☐ Individual Friend \$10/year
- ☐ Family Friend \$15/year
- ☐ Club / Organization Friend \$25/year
- ☐ Business Friend \$50/year
- ☐ Corporate Friend \$100/year

Extra Embroidered Patches: _____
@ \$3.00 each

Extra Decals: _____ @ \$1.00 each

Pins: _____ @ 5.00 each

Donation: _____

Please send my quarterly newsletter by email

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Thank You !



Membership Reminder

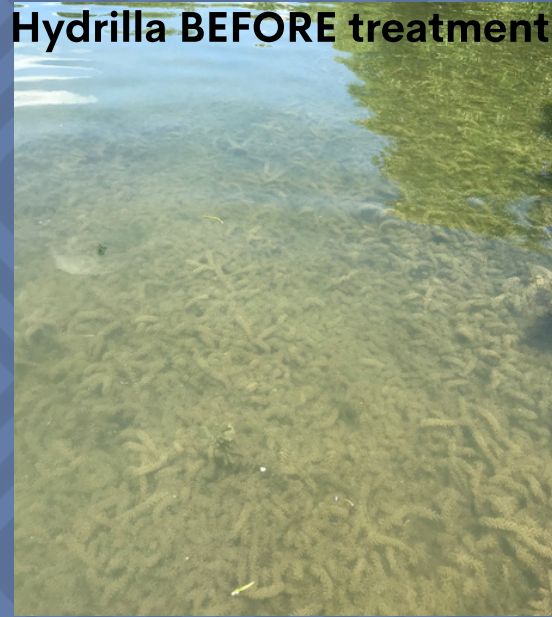
Please consider your **2020** membership ! Our memberships are set up on a calendar basis—January through December. As you may know, the bulk of our operating budget comes from membership fees. Please help to keep FRL strong and renew your membership today.

NATURAL RESOURCE UPDATE

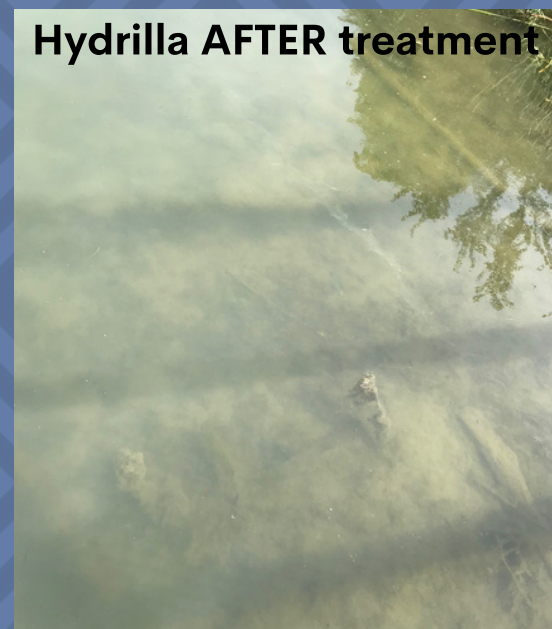
HYDRILLA TREATMENT

On July 15 the US Army Corps of Engineers treated a small section (about 1%) of the surface acreage of Raystown Lake for the invasive Hydrilla plant. Hydrilla can grow up to a foot a day and up to 30 feet in length! This plant grows so fast that it overtakes most other native aquatic plants, affects the diversity of fish populations, lowers the dissolved oxygen levels in the water, and can become entangled in boat motors or the limbs of a swimmer. The hydrilla was treated with a contact herbicide called "endothall", which has been proven non-toxic to wildlife and other aquatic plants. A survey completed on June 28th determined that the hydrilla in all treatment areas was dead or dying, making room for native species to regrow!

Hydrilla BEFORE treatment



Hydrilla AFTER treatment



WAYSIDE EXHIBITS

This summer, the US Army Corps installed new wayside exhibits in various locations at Raystown that provide information about wildlife habitat and native species in the area. Three of the new panels located outside the Visitor Center educate visitors about pollinators, the Chimney Swift Tower and Bradenbark nesting structures that are utilized by local birds, bees, bats, etc. The other two panels located near the Seven Points Amphitheater and High Germany near gate 28 were provided in partnership with the National Wild Turkey Federation. Be sure to stop by and check out these new exhibits!

**Exhibit near Gate 28
highlighting hedgerow habitats**



**Exhibit near Visitor
Center highlighting bats**



ALLEGRIPPIS ACTION

By Brent Rader (FRL Board Member & Allegrippis Volunteer)

Summer has been a busy time at the Allegrippis trails. Even though we were forced to postpone our signature event, Raystown Bike Fest, the trails have seen heavy use. They continue to grow in popularity and notoriety throughout the mountain biking community. New this year is the planned addition of a portable toilet to the Baker's Hollow parking area. This will be a great amenity for users, and will help to alleviate the pollution caused by users "taking care of business" in the woods near the parking lot.

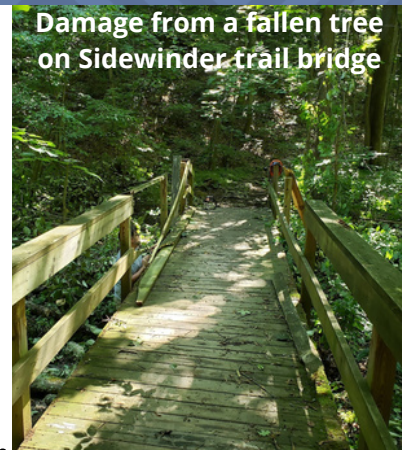
Like virtually everyone, we've been impacted with the restrictions around COVID-19. As mentioned above, we were forced to postpone Raystown Bike Fest until 2021. This was disappointing to say the least, but the extra time will allow us to plan an even better event. Most of the people that registered elected to carry over their registration fees until 2021, so we have a head start for next year.

Maintenance work has been eased this summer because of the dry weather, probably the only good thing about a summer with almost no rain. Volunteers continue to keep the trails open by cutting trees, trimming back brush, and maintaining structures. The die-off of Ash trees due to the Emerald Ash Borer continues to cause maintenance headaches, as the dead trees fall and block the trail. Over the summer, we had a tree fall on the bridge on Sidewinder trail, destroying the railings on about half of the bridge. Thankfully, there was no serious structural damage, and no one was in the area when it happened, so there were no injuries. With a little off-roading down an old Jeep trail, volunteers were able to get lumber and supplies fairly close to the bridge to complete repairs to the railings.

As we head into autumn, our volunteers will continue to work on trail maintenance. The hope is that if we take care of issues in the fall, there will be less work to do in the spring. Brush will be trimmed back, drainage will be corrected, and leaves will be removed from the trail where necessary to ensure a safe and fun trail corridor. There are also areas where the trail surface will need to be re-cut into the hillside after some erosion.

If you'd like to get involved, be sure to check us out. We're always looking for new people to help out with trail maintenance and construction. To keep tabs on what's going on, watch the Allegrippis Trails Facebook page, and follow us on Instagram at @allegrippistrails.

Damage from a fallen tree on Sidewinder trail bridge



Repairs being made on Sidewinder trail bridge



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