

# THE LILY PAD

Summer 2025 Newsletter

**ANNOUNCING 2024 - 2027  
STRATEGIC PLAN MAP**



FRIENDS OF  
**Reinstein**  
WOODS

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello, Friends!

Summer arrives! And with it comes that expectation of taking some time to get away from the daily grind, to slip away and enjoy the pleasant weather outside. Even if we can't manage to take a long vacation elsewhere, we're fortunate to have a place like Reinstein Woods close by to visit and experience its tranquility and our connection to the natural world.

Speaking of expectations, I know that the participants in the 2025 Kids in the Woods Summer Day Camp are eagerly awaiting the start of another fabulous schedule of fun activities and learning. And there will be plenty of programs throughout the summer months for others to take advantage of too, such as Firefly Walks and Trivia Night!

In this edition of the newsletter, we're ecstatic to announce a new Park and Trail Partnership Grant to fund the next phase of the Woodland Garden enclosure project. The fund will help us plant native flowers and shrubs, install teaching gardens, and provide public access to this space. You'll also get to read the successes of our Pathways to Environmental Learning and STEM in the Schoolyard: Watershed Engineers. Look for more information on upcoming events like the Artisan Market and Get Outdoors & Get Together Day, as well the story of Reinstein supporters Rick Allen and Ann Marie Nixon.

The Board is also excited to share here with you our new Strategic Plan Map, created over a year-long period of reflection and discussion regarding what Friends of Reinstein Woods is and what we look to be in the years ahead. I want to thank members of the Board, and staff, particularly Meaghan, for everyone's efforts in creating this important Strategic Plan that helps us as an organization take stock of what we offer and our priorities for a responsible future. In addition to clearly articulated Mission and Vision statements, the Map highlights areas of organizational impact and momentum, as well as listing goals for moving forward, most notably an enhanced, purposeful engagement of diverse communities surrounding Reinstein.

I'll close with an invitation to all for getting more involved with the Friends group. As always, we appreciate volunteers for events and would love to hear your thoughts about activities that could be fun. But also, please let us know if you would be interested in joining a committee or if you'd like to learn more about the Board. Only together can we continue to spread awareness and appreciation of our unique Reinstein Woods.

I look forward to seeing you outside there soon!

Daniel P. Haeusser, President



# WHERE THE TRAILS BEGIN: THE LOVE STORY OF RICK AND ANN

One sunlit day in the summer of 2003, Ann was at Lower Pond with her sister Cecelia, soaking in the breathtaking landscape of Reinstein Woods. As the friendly faces of Rick and Steve approached, a conversation began, dancing with curiosity and laughter. Captivated by Ann's charm and binoculars, Rick confided in Steve his hope to see her again.

That hope flickered into reality when Rick spotted Ann at a Fall Festival training. With a playful grin, he asked, "Haven't I seen you someplace before?" Rick's heart soared when Ann responded with equal warmth.

Soon after, their weekends became a tapestry woven with shared wanderings through the enchanting Reinstein Woods. Their quirky sense of humor turned even the most mundane moments into cherished memories, binding them closer with each laugh. As their friendship grew so did their romantic journey. Rick's knowledge of the trees meshed perfectly with Ann's enthusiasm for birds.

By the end of the year, Ann's family affectionately dubbed them "Ranger Rick" and "Audubon Annie." They continued to infuse joy into the Fall Festivals and led nature tours with boundless enthusiasm. Toward the end of 2005, Rick led Ann back to the Lower Pond Trail, where their paths first crossed, and proposed under the whispering trees.

Ann joyfully accepted, and by 2006, they found solace in a cozy house in South Buffalo. Their urban haven soon blossomed with nature's touch—seven new trees, vibrant flower pots, a rock garden, and a bountiful vegetable patch. Together, they explored Western New York by foot, skis, and canoe, embracing every season with wonder.

Tragically, Ann faced a courageous battle against gastrointestinal cancer, and in early 2024, she passed away. Rick cherished their 21 years together as the most beautiful of his life. The memories of their time in Reinstein Woods, where their enchanting love story began, remain a cherished solace in his heart. Each whisper of the trees and each rustle of leaves carries echoes of their laughter and love, a poignant reminder of what once was and what will forever reside in his heart.



Recognizing the significance of Reinstein Woods to Ann, her loved ones designated memorial donations to benefit the Friends of Reinstein Woods. These donations play a vital role in preserving this cherished place.

If you wish to initiate a memorial or honorary gift of your own, please contact our Development and Marketing Associate, Joann Flores, at [joann@reinsteinwoods.org](mailto:joann@reinsteinwoods.org).

# 2024 - 2027 STRATEGIC PLAN MAP

## MISSION AND VISION

The Mission of Friends of Reinstein Woods is to cultivate a lifelong appreciation of nature through education, stewardship, and shared experiences within and beyond the unique ecology of Reinstein Woods.

The Vision of Friends of Reinstein Woods is for Reinstein Woods to be an inclusive and equitable sanctuary where diverse communities share in nature's harmony, empowering individuals to be environmental stewards of our world.

## IMPACT AND MOMENTUM

By 2027, Friends of Reinstein Woods will demonstrate additional growth and progress in the following key areas:

### IMPACT

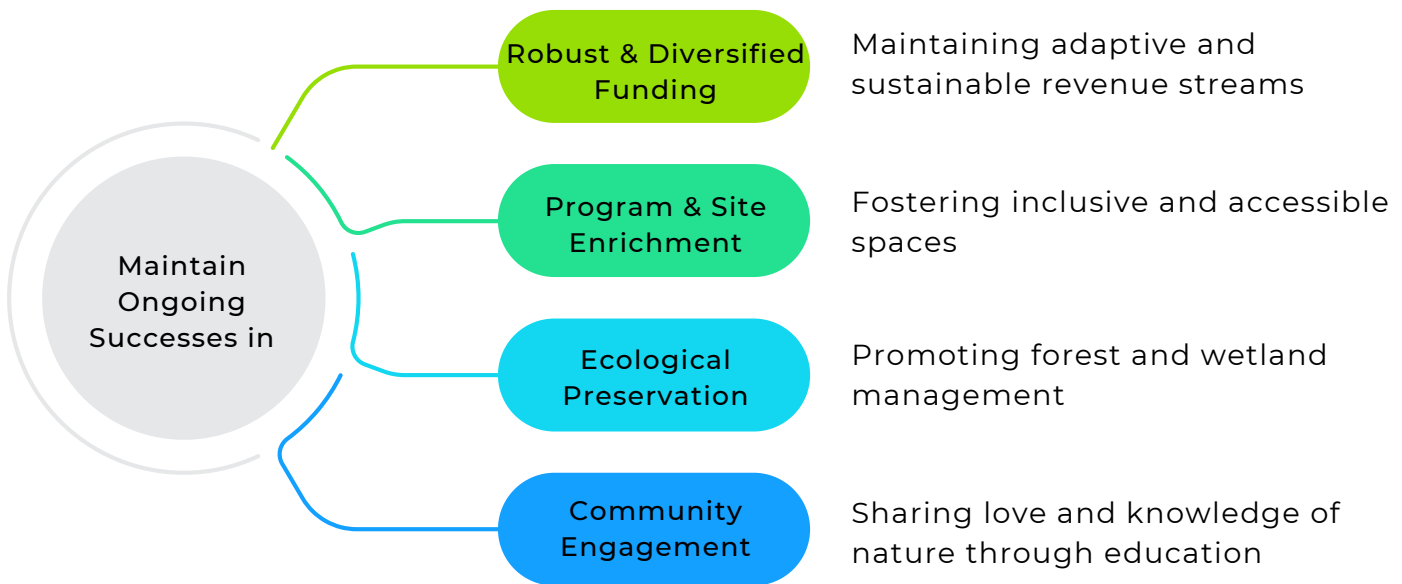


### How do the Friends of Reinstein Woods achieve this?

Our commitment to ongoing growth encompasses a deliberate and wider impact. This involves gathering and analyzing data to refine strategies, identify necessary resources, and forge partnerships that align with our mission-driven objectives.



## MOMENTUM



### We do this by:

The successful conclusion of our last Strategic Plan necessitates the adoption of routine practices for reviewing and refining our progress and goals in each successful area. This includes clearly defining updated plans to continue our efforts, and regular maintenance of channels of communication with all stakeholders.

## MOVING FORWARD

The Friends of Reinstein Woods, our leadership, and staff have achieved significant growth and success in recent years. As we launch this new strategic plan, we will foster this growth responsibly, staying true to our mission.

Through this plan, the Friends of Reinstein Woods will ensure mission alignment for all of the following:

Organizational roles, responsibilities, and needs

Expansion of our influence and relationships into broader, intentionally chosen communities

Current program evolution and new program development

## LET'S BE FRIENDS

If you are eager to support our mission or vision, please reach out to us at [info@reinsteinwoods.org](mailto:info@reinsteinwoods.org) or give us a call at (716) 683-5959. Reaching our goals will require a collective effort, so we encourage you to get involved with us!

Together, we can continue to preserve the natural beauty of Reinstein Woods and ensure it remains a vibrant sanctuary for both wildlife and the community. Join us on our journey to cultivate a deeper connection with nature and promote a sustainable future for generations to come.



FRIENDS OF REINSTEIN WOODS

# ARTISAN MARKET



**SATURDAY, JULY 12**

**11 AM TO 4 PM**



**Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve**

93 Honorine Drive, Depew, NY 14043

Visit [reinsteinwoods.org/artisan-market/](https://reinsteinwoods.org/artisan-market/)  
for more information!



# **GET OUTDOORS & GET TOGETHER DAY**

## **SATURDAY, JUNE 14 10AM – 2PM**

**Learn about outdoor skills like birding and geocaching. Enjoy guided walks, face painting, games, food trucks & more!**

**Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve  
93 Honorine Drive, Depew, NY 14043**



**Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation**



**For more information,  
visit [reinsteinwoods.org](http://reinsteinwoods.org)  
or call (716) 683-5959.**

# PATHWAYS TEENS CLEAN UP A CREEK



Since fall, our ten Pathways to Environmental Learning students have explored diverse environmental careers while gaining valuable environmental education and outreach skills. Recently they not only learned about their local environment but became stewards of it.

The teens organized a cleanup of Scajaquada Creek not far from Cheektowaga Central High School. Through school morning announcements, flyers, and collaboration with the Conservation Club, the students recruited about 20 enthusiastic volunteers who collected an impressive 68 pounds of trash and five pounds of recyclables in just two hours, as well as a shopping cart!



"The students were very excited to create change along Scajacuada Creek, where they've been doing water testing since October," said Reinstein Educator and Pathways Coordinator Maeve Sweeney. "They were excited to work with their peers and to educate them on why cleanups are important."



# PATHWAYS CONTINUED

The students created posters and brochures to educate participants and school members about threats to the creek and what can be done to protect it.

It was a delight to witness our students orchestrate such a vibrant event caring for the creek that they've learned so much about. Other stewardship projects they'll be completing this spring include building raised garden beds for the Woodland Garden at Reinstein Woods, and sharing the results of their water testing with community. We thank the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo for making the Pathways to Environmental Learning Program possible.



# MARYVALE VISITS REINSTEIN WOODS

You may recall from past newsletters that our Educator Sarah Klos, along with interns, has been leading weekly nature programs with students from Maryvale Primary and Union East Elementary Schools. After diving into the wonders of watersheds and how to protect them, what better way to learn about wetlands than by seeing one in person on a guided tour around Reinstein Woods. More than 30 students and staff from Maryvale Primary School visited Reinstein over spring break thanks to a grant from the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE). In addition to hearing the sounds of woodpeckers and seeing painted turtles soaking up the sun, the students got to view wetland dioramas that had been made by students in the “STEM in the Schoolyard: Watershed Engineers” after-school program. The dioramas were on display at Reinstein Woods in honor of Earth Month.

For Maryvale student Isabel, it was a storybook moment coming full circle. This was her first time seeing her wetland diorama in person after creating it. Her face lit up to see her masterpiece proudly displayed in the Education Center for all to see. She even grabbed a friend and told the chaperones about her and her classmates' time working on it.



# WOODLAND GARDEN UPDATE

Friends of Reinstein Woods has received a \$20,717 grant from the Environmental Protection Fund's Park and Trail Partnership Grants program to enable visitor access and improve habitats in the Woodland Garden Enclosure at Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve.

The 2025 grant will provide special gates so trail visitors can access the enclosure while keeping out deer. Inside, raised garden beds, constructed by teens from Cheektowaga High School, will provide a safe space to grow a variety of native wildflowers that normally would not survive being eaten by the large deer population at Reinstein Woods. Shrubs and other native wild plants will be added along a footpath. Benches and educational signs will provide opportunities for visitors to reflect and enjoy the peaceful setting. The Woodland Garden also provides opportunities for local students to study and learn about the forest ecosystem.

During I Love My Park Day on May 3, volunteers from the University at Buffalo and Friends of Reinstein Woods reinforced portions of the fence, cleared the future footpath path of debris, and cleared the area where the raised garden beds will be installed. The path and gates are expected to be completed by late 2025.

The Woodland Garden project was supported by a New York State Park and Trail Partnership Grant and New York's Environmental Protection Fund. The Park and Trail Partnership Grants are administered by Parks & Trails New York, in partnership with the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.



## TRAIL THURSDAYS

We are seeking volunteers to assist with enhancing our trails! Activities include, trail maintenance, trash cleanup, invasive species removal, and weeding our garden beds. We gather every Thursday from 6 PM to 8 PM, and this initiative will run until September!

Interested in learning more? Contact SCA Educator Hannah at: [hannah.james@dec.ny.gov](mailto:hannah.james@dec.ny.gov) or give us a call at: 716-683-5959.



# PARKS ADVENTURE BUS TO VISIT REINSTEIN WOODS THIS SUMMER



NFTA-Metro is sending out the Parks Adventure Bus to parks around the region for FREE! No fare for these trips, both ways. Trips depart and return to the main terminal in downtown Buffalo.

Reinstein Woods dates include:

- Get Outdoors Day - Saturday, June 14
- Saturday, August 2
- Fall Festival - Saturday, September 20

For more information such as departure or arrival times, check out their website at:  
<https://metro.nfta.com/programs/parks-adventure-bus>

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