

Dam Duck Race raises thousands for local projects

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Local News

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Staff from Howl at the Moon Mechanicals dumped 1,750 numbered yellow rubber ducks into Mill Pond on Sept. 23 to begin the Lake Placid Rotary Club's annual Dam Duck Race. (Provided photo)

LAKE PLACID — The Rotary Club of Lake Placid raised about \$20,000 during its 18th annual Dam Duck Race benefit on Sept. 23, according to co-organizer Bridget McKillip.

At 6 p.m., staff from Howl at the Moon Mechanicals dumped 1,750 numbered yellow rubber ducks into Mill Pond from a pontoon boat. The ducks then “raced” over the Mill Pond dam and into the Chubb River, where they were scooped up in nets by Rotary Club volunteers next to Lisa G’s restaurant at the corner of Sentinel Road and Station Street. Lisa G’s was the Dam Duck Race headquarters, and an all-you-can-eat buffet was served at 5 p.m. to kick the event off. The dam is behind the restaurant, and the river flows next to it.

Family-friendly activities — including music, face painting and a mechanical riding bull — were also offered to the public during the celebration.

The top winners were: first place, \$1,500, Cait Ennis with Duck 437; second place, \$300, Bergen (Duck 559); third place, \$200, Syd Milani (Duck 1292). There was also a prize for the last duck to cross the finish line, a round of golf for four at one of the Crown Plaza's Lake Placid Club golf courses, valued at \$360, which went to Fitness Revolution (Duck 1054).

All the proceeds go back into the community. The Rotary Club's most recent project was the installation of two bus shelters in the village, one at Cascade Acres and another at the Four Seasons Apartments on state Route 73. A third bus shelter is being placed near the Lake Placid Center for the Arts.



Here is a scene from the Lake Placid Rotary Club's 2023 Dam Duck Race, which was held on Sept. 23. (Provided photo)

Other organizations the Rotary Club has helped with its fundraising efforts include the Lake Placid Elementary School for a new playground, Mercy Care for the Adirondacks, Lake Placid Ecumenical Food Pantry, Lake Placid Community Beautification Association, North Elba Community Christmas Fund and Shipman Youth Center. Plus the club takes care of a few parks in town — Jewtraw Park bordering Mill Pond on Station Street and Rotary Park bordering Mill Pond on Dow Road (near the Lake Placid Volunteer Ambulance Service garage) — and recently helped with the rehabilitation of the McKinley Street park.

The Rotary Club's Dam Duck Race began in 2004 with 200 ducks, raising about \$3,000 to renovate the Jewtraw and Mill Pond (Rotary) parks. Those ducks sold out, so organizers increased the duck count to 600 for the following year. The number of ducks continued to be raised over the years. In 2018, the magic number was 15, as in the 15th annual race, and the number of ducks was increased from 1,200 to 1,500 – 100 ducks for every year.

The race, which was traditionally held in June, was canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 and again in 2021 and was moved to September in 2022.

This year, organizers upped the amount of ducks from 1,500 to 1,750 to see if they could sell more. The strategy worked. The ducks sold out just before race time, according to McKillip.



Here is a scene from the Lake Placid Rotary Club's 2023 Dam Duck Race, which was held on Sept. 23. (Provided photo)



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