



## Community update December 2025

Dear Friends of the Mill Pond,

As 2025 comes to a close, the Friends of the Mill Pond committee would like to share an update on our progress and extend a heartfelt thank-you to all who continue to support this effort. To our volunteers, donors, and community members—your contributions matter. Whether you helped at fundraisers, placed lawn signs, attended community meetings, shared your ideas, or provided financial support, your engagement fuels everything we do. We truly could not do this without you.

The challenges we witnessed this past summer on Big Green Lake and the Mill Pond reinforced our shared vision: **restoring the Mill Pond as a vibrant, long-term recreational and economic asset for the entire Green Lake community—residents and visitors alike.**

## What We've Accomplished Over the Past 9 Months

### 1. Official Nonprofit Status

We're proud to share that *Friends of the Mill Pond* has been officially recognized as a **501(c)(3) nonprofit organization**. This important milestone allows us to accept tax-deductible donations and opens new doors for grants and partnerships.

## 2. Strengthening Communication

We've made significant strides in keeping the community informed and engaged. Over the past several months, we've:

- Hosted a **community meeting** to share updates and gather feedback.  
[Click here to view Community Meeting Recording](#)
- Launched our **website and social media channels** to serve as central hubs for information and updates.  
[Friends Of The Mill Pond Website](#)
- Installed **signage** around Green Lake to build awareness. Please let us know if you would like to obtain a lawn sign for a \$20 donation to cover costs.



## 3. Building Strategic Partnerships

We continue to work closely with organizations that share our goals to ensure one cohesive plan for Green Lake and the Mill Pond. These include the **Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Sanitary District, Green Lake Association (GLA), City of Green Lake, Green Lake Parks & Recreation, and the GL Chamber of Commerce**, with special emphasis on the **Main Street Initiative**. Most importantly, the City of Green Lake, the Chamber Main Street Initiative, and the GLA are now including Mill Pond in strategic planning documents, ensuring we are building one plan for Green Lake and Mill Pond. All of these partners support our vision and are helping define the best path forward. We would like to especially call out the Green Lake Association and the DNR, which have provided a wealth of knowledge and insight, and, in the case of the GLA, financial support, during the initial assessment stage.

## 4. Learning and Building a Knowledge Base

We are seeking to educate ourselves on all aspects of planning, approval, and funding initiatives similar to those outlined in our vision and detailed on our website. This included speaking with other communities that have undertaken similar projects (such as North Lake, which is northwest of Milwaukee) as well as attending free seminars offered by the Main Street Initiative, including one in November in Port Washington that focused on revitalizing downtown areas through strategic marketing, environmental improvements, design projects, and economic development. We are also discovering how helpful the testing and evaluation work performed by the GLA over the years will be in saving us time and money, as we can leverage much of their work.

## 5. Fundraising and Financial Support

We've been actively raising money to fund the crucial early stages of our planning process—including a bathymetric survey, silt testing, and the development of an aquatic plant management plan.



Our financial backing has been broad and community-driven, including:

- The **Green Lake Association**
- The **Green Lake Rotary Club**
- **Local businesses and individual residents**
- **Adams Rib Community Fundraiser**
- Fundraising events such as **brat fry's** and **50/50 raffles**

We are also applying for a **planning grant from the DNR** to help offset silt testing and planning expenses.





## Our Goals for the Next 9 Months

### 1. Conduct a Bathymetric Survey

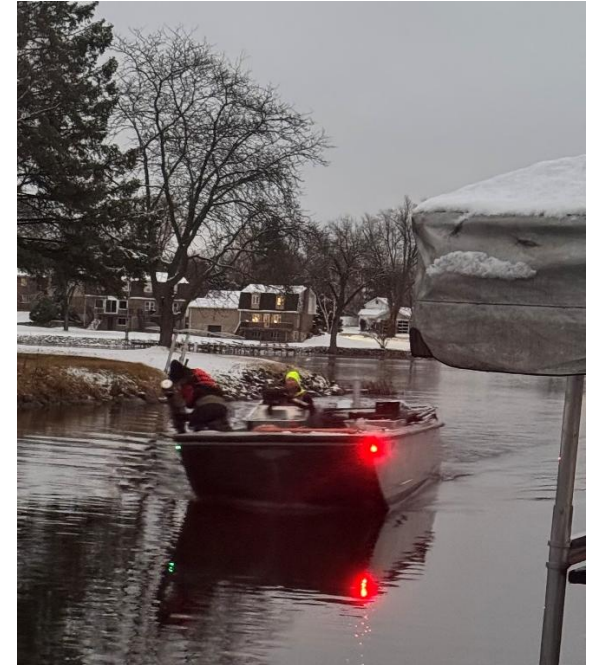
We have contracted **Michels Marine Construction** to complete a bathymetric survey. This study will map water depths and silt levels—essential information for designing the restoration plan, engaging with the DNR, and estimating project costs. Results are expected in early 2026.

### 2. Aquatic Plant Management & Silt Testing

Once initial discussions with the DNR are complete, using the Bathymetric survey, we plan on moving forward with **silt testing** and an **aquatic plant management plan**. We're fortunate that the GLA's recent aquatic plant survey included Mill Pond, which will save both time and money.

The silt testing, to be performed by a **Wisconsin-certified lab corporation**, will tell us two things:

- What harmful elements (like phosphorus) will we be removing to improve water health?
- That no contaminants exist which would complicate disposal.



### 3. Explore Access and Usability Improvements

We are in the early stages of designing improvements that will make Mill Pond more accessible and enjoyable, including:

- **Dock parking** within Mill Pond for easier access to downtown
- **Improvements to both boat launches** (Canal Street and Campground)
- **Mobility-friendly access** for kayaking and paddleboarding
- **Restoring quality Fishing** in Mill Pond and encouraging more spawning
- **Input on the future redesign of the Lawson Street Bridge** in coordination with WisDOT, the City of Green Lake, and the DNR

Since the bridge replacement is likely 5–10 years away, now is the right time to ensure all projects work together seamlessly.

#### **4. Identify Grants and Financing Options**

We're beginning to explore potential **grant programs and financing opportunities** to help fund the project once a final plan is approved. We expect this project to be funded through a combination of private, community, business, and federal/state grant resources. A lot more work needs to take place once we understand the scope of the project, and we will update everyone for input once our approach starts to take more form.

#### **5. Continue Fundraising and Community Engagement**

Our committee members are all volunteers, but we must cover costs to keep progress moving. Please consider supporting our mission by making a **tax-deductible donation** through our website or by contacting any committee members directly. We will also need more volunteers for brat fry's and 50/50 raffles, and will reach out once dates are finalized.

## **Looking Ahead**

The next six months will be busy and exciting as we move from planning to data collection and design. Our shared goal guides every step we take: to create a healthy, vibrant, and accessible Mill Pond that benefits the entire Green Lake community for generations to come.

Thank you again for your continued support, energy, and optimism. Together, we're making real progress. As always, please feel free to reach out with any ideas, questions, or input.

**— The Friends of the Mill Pond Committee**

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