

What about rowing in Ann Arbor?

If Argo Dam is removed, the four rowing teams that use Argo Pond would have to move. HRWC wants rowing to thrive in Ann Arbor, but we believe that rowing can do well on other ponds, and that the environmental benefits of removing Argo Dam outweigh the challenges it will cause.

- **Argo dam will not be removed if new homes cannot be found for the rowing teams.** All proposals to remove Argo Dam contain a "safety valve" for rowing: a provision, in writing, that was affirmed by the HRIMP committee, which studied the issue for two years, and reaffirmed by the Parks Advisory Commission and the Environmental Commission.
- As a member of the HRIMP committee, **Laura Rubin of HRWC helped write the provisions that ensure rowing's continuity.**
- **If city council votes to remove Argo Dam, it will actually be voting to start the process of removal.** This process will include a number of steps, from testing the sediments for contamination (initial tests show they are clean) to establishing rowing in new locations.
- In a 1983 study, conducted when rowing teams were trying to get established, the rowing community ranked Barton and Gallup Ponds as the best locations for rowing. Argo Pond came in third place. Today the rowers would prefer to remain on Argo, but the claim that rowing *cannot* survive elsewhere is dubious.
- When Skyline High began to assemble a rowing team, it was told by existing teams that Argo Pond is overcrowded, and that it should look for another venue. Skyline has already approached the City of Ann Arbor for help in establishing a rowing facility at Barton Pond.
- Gallup Park is a natural location for the high school teams. It is directly across the street from Huron High. There is adequate space for a boathouse at Furstenberg Park. And the rowing season ends in the spring before the Gallup canoe livery opens; it begins in the fall after the livery has closed. So there will be minimal interference from other recreational users.
- Gallup Park has a "pinch point"--a footbridge--that limits the length of the rowing course. This can be altered, however, to open up space for two boats to pass through.
- The U-M Men's rowing team--one of the best in the country--should move to a facility with competition-length practice courses. They can join the U-M Women's team at Belleville Lake; they have also been invited to help build a new facility at Ford Lake with the Eastern Michigan University rowers. U-M's main objection to moving to these locations is the inconvenience to their athletes--a serious consideration but not necessarily one that Ann Arbor taxpayers should have to pay for.
- No matter where the rowing teams move, there will be obstacles to overcome. And if, in the end, the challenges cannot be met, then Argo will stay. That has been in writing from the very beginning, and it's been endorsed by *every single organization* that has called for removing Argo Dam.
- Discussions between the city staff, rowers, and Barton Hills Maintenance Corporation need to begin. The city needs to explore the viability of rowing on these other ponds.