

Rowing's Next Mecca?

New York Rowing announces plans for new tri-state rowing hub.

The Trustees of New York Rowing recently announced plans to construct a new race course on 2.36 acres of land on Overpeck Lake in New Jersey. The announcement comes following an in-kind donation of the land valued at \$960,000 by the Bruderer Corporation.

The new training center and course is already being touted as one of the most convenient venues for junior, collegiate, and masters programs alike in the tri-state area, and will be the closest such facility to the heart of New York City. In addition to its proximity to major population centers, the site is ideally suited for rowing thanks to the geography of Overpeck Creek County Park, which includes gently sloping hills that shelter the course on all sides.

"It's a project we've been working on for four years," says Thomas Curry, executive director of New York Rowing. "After our early efforts were lost in public bureaucracy, we sought private property. The land was donated by a private owner."

Now that they can finally break ground (or water, as the case may be), Curry is excited to begin the project, which he hopes will be ready by March of 2012. The deadline is ambitious, but not unrealistic. "The lake is dredged to 16 feet throughout, and there is little to no flow," says Curry. "The water rises and falls about six inches and is controlled by a lock system."

Currently, the lake can accommodate a five-lane course, but with further clearance and dredging, it could be expanded to an eight-lane, FISA-standard course. This would make it possible for the venue to host international regattas like world championships and an event on the World Cup circuit. "The county needs to be educated about the benefits of a FISA course," Curry explains. "It's definitely in the plans for the future."

Curry has already been in contact with many of the local colleges and universities in the area—relationships he would like to develop further and which could have major implications for the site's ambitions as a hub for intercollegiate and junior rowing competitions, as well as a host for junior national team development camps.

Curry says organizers are planning on leaving the buoyed course in all year long, sinking it during the winter months. The goal is to be hosting club, masters, and regional high school regattas within a year. "There is also a strong dragon boat presence in the area, and we hope to work with them as well, hosting festivals and competitions," he adds. Phase Two of the project has already begun, with plans being drawn up for the construction of new training facilities.

—Bryan Kitch

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