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## July 2026

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*The Newsletter of the  
Pikes Peak Koi and Water Garden Society  
Colorado Springs, Colorado*

## A Peak at Ponds

Join us for our Annual Koi Auction and Pizza Party.  
This meeting will begin at **6:30 pm** so you can get your fill of pizza,  
with the Koi Auction starting about **7:00 pm**.  
This is a PPKWGS Members and Family Only event.



## President's Ponderings

### The Journey Continues

As I watched the activity at this year's Koi Rehoming Auction, I found myself reflecting on what makes our hobby—and our club—so special. It certainly isn't just the beauty of the fish or the serenity of a pond. It's the people who care enough to ensure that every koi has the opportunity to live a long, healthy life, even when circumstances change.



Many of us remember bringing home our first koi. They were small, colorful, and full of promise. What we may not have fully appreciated at the time was that we were making a commitment that could last decades. Koi are not short-term pets. They grow, they mature, and with proper care, they often outlive many of the assumptions we make when we first enter the hobby.

Over the years, life happens. Families relocate. Ponds are redesigned. Health concerns arise. Sometimes a pond owner simply reaches a point where maintaining a collection is no longer practical. None of these situations diminish the love and care that went into raising those fish. In fact, one of the most responsible decisions a koi keeper can make is finding a better situation for fish when circumstances demand it.

That is where the Pikes Peak Koi & Water Garden Society shines.

Our annual Rehoming Auction is much more than an auction. It is a demonstration of stewardship. It brings together people who understand that the responsibility of koi keeping extends beyond ownership. It creates opportunities for experienced hobbyists to mentor newcomers, for established ponds to welcome fish that need a new home, and for valuable knowledge to be shared from one generation of pond keepers to the next.

What impressed me most this year was not the quality of the fish—although there were some wonderful koi available. It was the willingness of our members to help. Volunteers spent hours organizing the event. Members answered questions, offered advice, and shared their expertise freely. Buyers and sellers alike understood that the goal was not simply to transfer fish from one pond to another, but to ensure their continued care and success.

In many ways, that spirit reflects the broader mission of our society. We are not simply a club that talks about koi and water gardens. We are a community dedicated to education, mentorship, and responsible stewardship. We help newcomers avoid mistakes. We celebrate successes. We learn from challenges. And when needed, we help ensure that cherished fish find the next chapter in their journey.

Every koi in our ponds today has a story. Some were purchased from dealers. Some were won at club events. Some arrived through rehoming efforts, just like the one we held last weekend. Regardless of where they came from, their future depends on the care and commitment of the people who keep them.

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As we move through another Colorado summer, I encourage each of us to remember that stewardship is not measured by the size of our ponds or the value of our fish. It is measured by our willingness to care, to learn, and to help one another. The Rehoming Auction is one of the clearest examples of those values in action, and it reminds me why I am proud to be a member of this organization.

Thank you to everyone who participated, volunteered, donated fish, shared advice, or simply supported the event. Because of your efforts, the journey continues—for the koi, for their new owners, and for the hobby we all enjoy.

## Koi Rehoming Auction

What an incredible day! Our 2026 Koi Rehoming Auction was a tremendous success, and it would not have been possible without the generosity and dedication of so many wonderful people.

Together, we successfully rehomed **46 Koi**, generating **\$5,065** in total revenue. While we are still waiting for a few final expense receipts, we expect the club to realize a profit of approximately **\$3,500** after expenses are paid and proceeds are shared with our generous donors.

A heartfelt **thank you** goes to our members who donated their beautiful koi to make this event possible:

Mike Davis & Jean Susemihl

Henry Gonzales & Lucy Valdez

Phil & Ellen Goulding

Tim & Jen Jardeleza

Becky Murphy

Your generosity directly supports our club while ensuring these wonderful koi find new homes where they can continue to thrive.



*The Meinig Family*

We would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to **Phelan Gardens** for once again hosting our auction and providing such an outstanding venue. Their continued support is invaluable and greatly appreciated.

Finally, this event simply could not happen without our amazing volunteers. Thank you to **Cathy Bulf, Bob Oatman, Phil Goulding, Brenda Walth, Lori Villa, Robin Robbins, Ellen Simco, Nicholas Simco, Henry Gonzales, Lucy Valdez, Karen Seder, Bill & Dolora Griesinger, Tom Taylor, Nathan Oatman, Ashlyn Beaver, Eliot Beaver, and Meghna** for donating your time and energy before, during, and after the auction.

**Every donor, volunteer, bidder, and attendee helped make this event a resounding success.** Thank you all for supporting the Pikes Peak Koi & Water Garden Society—we're already looking forward to next year's auction!

## Interesting Tidbits

For much of the world, but not the US, the water volume of ponds is often expressed in tons. This is not 2,000 pounds! It is a cubic meter or 1,000 liters of water. For those who are metric-challenged, to convert metric tons to US gallons, multiply the tons by 264; for UK gallons, multiply by 220.

Stress from poor water conditions accumulates in Koi. When Koi experience it, it reduces the slime coat, which is the first and best line of defense that they have. It also reduces the immune system, which then allows them to catch the first pathogen that passes by. So proper water quality is important. One solution for loss of slime coat is to use Ultimate, as it replaces the slime coat with a polymer only in the areas that it is needed, without clogging the gills.

KH (carbonate hardness) buffers pH, preventing dangerous swings. This is not the same as GH (general hardness). If the carbonate hardness is depleted, the pH of the pond will crash. This is such a serious issue that it could lead to a complete loss of life within a pond. The biggest contributor to the acidity of the water in a Koi pond is carbon dioxide, which is produced by Koi respiration, photosynthesis of plants, and decomposition of waste. The higher the stocking of fish, the more important that an adequate level of carbonate is maintained.

Safe range:

Ideal KH: **100–200 ppm** (up to 500 ppm is safe).

Key Facts:

- KH is always decreasing as fish and bacteria consume carbonates.

- Raising KH: Baking soda is the easiest, cheapest option.

- Limit KH adjustments to no more than 20 ppm at a time to avoid stress.

Treatment for low KH:

- 1 cup of baking soda raises KH in 1,000 gallons by ~70 ppm.

- No direct correlation between KH and pH, but high pH increases ammonia toxicity.

## Board of Directors Update

After many years of dedicated service to both SOCOKOI and the Pikes Peak Koi & Water Garden Society (PPKWGS), Phil Goulding has announced his decision to step down from the Board of Directors and his role as Treasurer.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Phil for his years of commitment, leadership, and countless contributions to the club. His efforts have played an important role in the continued success and growth of our organization, and we wish him all the best.

Following Phil's resignation, Brenda Walth has graciously accepted the position of Treasurer. As a result, the position of Secretary is now vacant.

If you are interested in serving on the Board of Directors and helping guide the future of PPKWGS, we encourage you to contact Bob Oatman for additional information. We are always looking for members who are willing to share their time and talents in support of the club.

# Safeguarding Koi Fish During Wildfires: A Complete Survival Guide

Wildfires present a severe, often overlooked danger to outdoor koi ponds. While the water offers protection from direct flames, falling ash and heavy smoke can rapidly alter water chemistry, deplete oxygen, and prove fatal to your fish.

Here is a comprehensive guide on how to protect your koi before, during, and after a wildfire.

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## 1. Pre-Fire Preparation: Building a Contingency Kit

When a wildfire threatens your area, grid power failure is highly likely. Preparing your equipment in advance is the best way to ensure your fish survive a prolonged outage.

- **Backup Power:** Secure a generator or a dedicated solar power station to keep essential filtration running.
  - **Battery Air Pumps:** Keep several high-output, battery-operated aerators and plenty of fresh batteries on hand.
  - **Physical Covers:** Store heavy-duty plastic tarps, shade cloth, or plywood sheets near the pond for quick deployment.
  - **Chemical Supplies:** Stock up on premium water conditioners (ammonia/chlorine detoxifiers) and a large supply of high-grade activated carbon.
- 

## 2. Immediate Actions When Smoke and Ash Arrive

If smoke fields or falling ash reach your property, you must act quickly to seal the pond environment and stabilize the water quality.

### Secure Physical Cover

Drape your tarps or plywood over the pond. This creates a physical barrier against toxic ash, which contains highly alkaline potassium and calcium oxides that drastically spike water pH. Leave a small gap at one end to allow gas exchange.

### Maximize Aeration

Smoke blocks sunlight and heat accelerates oxygen depletion. Turn on all air stones and water features. If the main power fails, immediately deploy your backup battery-operated aerators.

### Isolate the Biological Filter

Turn off surface skimmers and bottom drains. This stops the pump from pulling heavy ash directly into your biological filter, which could smother and kill your beneficial nitrifying bacteria. Keep a standalone submersible pump or air stone running inside the filter chamber to keep the good bacteria alive.

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## Stop All Feeding

Do not feed your koi. Fish can go days without you feeding them. Digestion requires immense oxygen, and feeding creates waste. Minimizing waste prevents deadly ammonia spikes while your filtration is compromised.

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### 3. Post-Wildfire Recovery: Restoring the Pond

Once the immediate danger passes, the water must be cleaned systematically to prevent delayed toxicity.

Step 1: Physical Clean → Step 2: Chemical Clean → Step 3: Water Changes  
(Skim & Vacuum)                      (Activated Carbon)                      (10% Daily Changes)

- **Physical Removal:** Carefully skim any ash floating on the surface. Use a pond vacuum to clear the sediment from the bottom before it dissolves and alters the pH.
- **Deploy Activated Carbon:** Pack your filter chambers with fresh activated carbon. Carbon acts like a chemical sponge, absorbing complex smoke toxins, heavy metals, and airborne fire-retardant residues.
- **Gradual Water Changes:** Do not perform a massive water change, as this will shock already stressed fish. Instead, perform small daily water changes of 10% to 15%. Always treat the incoming water with a heavy-duty dechlorinator and toxin binder.

**Monitor Water Parameters:** Test the pH, ammonia, and dissolved oxygen levels daily for at least two weeks. Ash will cause the pH to fluctuate, requiring careful monitoring to ensure it stays stable.

Finally, don't forget that there are many people within the club who can help. If you are in a pre-evacuation zone and are thinking about the need to get your fish to safety, reach out to any board member. Your own personal safety is the priority, always. After that, if you have fish that need to be evacuated the club has emergency tanks that can be deployed to hold your fish temporarily, and there will be folks willing to talk you through what you need to do to help your fish.

Hopefully none of you will ever need this information, but if you do, now you have it. Don't wait until the last minute to realize you don't have a wildfire safety plan for you, your family and your animals. Think about it now so if you find yourself in a fire zone you are prepared and simply have to take your plan off the shelf and execute it.

Why do koi fish always travel in groups of four?

Because if they are attacked, koi A, B, & C can scatter, leaving behind the D koi.



Every year, one of the most anticipated events on the Pikes Peak Koi & Water Garden Society calendar is our Annual Pond Tour. It's our opportunity to showcase the beauty, creativity, and diversity of water gardens throughout the Pikes Peak region. It is also one of the best ways we introduce the public to our hobby and inspire future pond keepers.

This year's tour is shaping up to be another fantastic event—but we have a challenge.

Simply put, we need more ponds!

Visitors love seeing a variety of water features. Some enjoy large koi ponds with impressive filtration systems and championship-quality fish.

Others are inspired by small backyard water gardens, patio ponds, streams, waterfalls, and creative landscaping ideas. What makes our tour special is not that every pond is perfect—it's that every pond is unique.

Many members hesitate to volunteer because they think their pond isn't large enough, mature enough, or impressive enough. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In fact, some of the most talked-about ponds from previous tours have been modest backyard retreats created through imagination, persistence, and a love of water gardening. Visitors often appreciate seeing projects that resemble what they might realistically create in their own yards. They want ideas. They want inspiration. They want to talk with fellow hobbyists who share their successes and challenges.

The Pond Tour is not a competition. It is a celebration.

By opening your pond for a few hours, you become an ambassador for our hobby. You help educate the public about responsible koi keeping, water quality, aquatic plants, filtration, and the joys of creating a backyard oasis. You help demonstrate what our club is all about: sharing knowledge, encouraging creativity, and fostering a community of pond enthusiasts.

Every additional pond makes the tour better. More stops create more variety, shorter travel distances between locations, and a richer experience for visitors. Most importantly, additional exhibitors help ensure the continued success and growth of one of our signature events.

If you've ever thought about participating, this is the year to step forward. Don't worry about whether your pond is "good enough." If it brings you enjoyment and reflects your passion for the hobby, chances are it will inspire someone else as well.

Our members have built an incredible collection of ponds and water features throughout the region. Now it's time to share them.

The success of the Pond Tour depends on the willingness of members like you to open your gates and welcome visitors into your aquatic world. We need additional exhibitors, and we hope you'll consider becoming one of them. At this point, we only have 4 ponds signed up.

Let's make this year's Pond Tour our best one yet!

Please contact Allen Burbidge at (719) 574-5176 [pondtour@ppwgs.org](mailto:pondtour@ppwgs.org)

Or Bob Oatman at (719) 465-6731 or [President@ppwgs.org](mailto:President@ppwgs.org)

# PPKWGS Important Dates for 2026

Board Meetings are held on the Thursday after club meetings.  
You are welcome to join us. Ask any board member for more information.

Special Dates are highlighted and linked to the website

[09 July - 5th Club Meeting - Koi Auction and Pizza Party \(6:30PM start time\)](#)

[01-02 Aug - 37th Annual Pond Tour](#)

[13 Aug - 6th Club Meeting](#)

[22 Aug - Evening Soiree](#)

[29 Aug - Union Printer Home Fall Workshop](#)

[10 Sept - 7th Club Meeting](#)

[26 Sept Humane Society Fall Workshop](#)

[08 Oct - 8th & Final Club Meeting - Annual BBQ \(6:30PM start time\)](#)

Board Meetings are held virtually on Thursdays, one week after the regular monthly meeting. Everyone is welcome at the board meetings. Ask a board member for more information.

Print out this page and post it somewhere so you can keep track of our events!  
(Paid members will receive a personal, pre-printed copy of this in the mail)

And don't forget to use a Name Tag Sticker offered by the club when you come to the next club meeting. It helps to get to know one another when your name is right there!

## Highlighted Plant of the Month



### Umbrella Palm - *Cyperus alternifolius*

Tropical Marginal None An excellent accent plant for ponds or patios.

Umbrella Palms have 24 to 72 inch high stems with thin blades arranged like an umbrella on the end. Plant them in nutrient rich soil in 2 to 5-gallon or larger containers.

Hardy to Zone 9.

Plant 1-6" depth, Sun/Partial Shade, 12-48" spread. Treat as an annual.

# Club News

## Discover the Convenience of Club-Owned Oase PondoVac 5's



As proud owners of two of these powerful pond vacuums, we're excited to offer them exclusively to our paid club members. If you're planning to clean out your pond and don't have your own pond vac, worry not! Borrow ours and simplify your pond maintenance. These professional-grade vacuums make the task a breeze.

Do you need a pond vac to help clean out your pond? We have an Oase PondoVac 5 you can borrow for free.

To reserve it, reach out to Allen Burbidge at (719) 574-5176.

## Website Spotlight

Did you miss a meeting but don't want to miss out on what we might have discussed?

Fear Not!

If we own the rights to the presentation, we post it in PDF format on our website for your viewing enjoyment.

[Documents > View PowerPoints.](#)

If we do not own the rights to the presentation, our Secretary Brenda Walth has been doing a wonderful job of taking detailed notes and posting them to the website.

[Members Area > Club Meeting Minutes](#)



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New Membership Applications and Membership Dues can be submitted via our website at [PPKWGS.ORG](http://PPKWGS.ORG) . Or, you can fill out the Application/Renewal form below and mail it and your payment to the address listed.

Memberships are considered inactive if dues are not paid by May of the current year. (Remember, if you purchased your membership after the pond tour, your membership includes the rest of that year and all of the next year.)

We are meeting in person again, so it should be a great year. Please continue supporting your club by continuing to pay your membership dues.

**Pikes Peak Koi & Water Garden Society  
2026 Membership Application / Renewal**

- DATE \_\_\_\_\_ RENEWAL \_\_\_\_\_ NEW \_\_\_\_\_ (Please write legibly)
- NAME \_\_\_\_\_ NAME \_\_\_\_\_
- EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_
- HOME PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ HOME PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_
- MOBILE PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ MOBILE PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_
- MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_
- CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_
- LIST PROGRAMS that would be of interest to you \_\_\_\_\_
- YES! I would like to help with PLANT SALE \_\_\_\_\_ POND TOUR \_\_\_\_\_ TOUR EXHIBITOR \_\_\_\_\_  
 CLUB MEETINGS \_\_\_\_\_ WORKSHOPS \_\_\_\_\_ OTHER \_\_\_\_\_
- ANNUAL DUES INDIVIDUAL \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ FAMILY \$15 \_\_\_\_\_
- PAY TO: PIKES PEAK KOI & WATER GARDEN SOCIETY
- **MAIL TO:** PPKWGS Membership - c/o Allen Burbidge, 4314 Meadowview Court, Colorado Springs, CO 80918
- Phone: 719-574-5176 Email: [membership@ppkwgs.org](mailto:membership@ppkwgs.org) WEB: [www.ppkwgs.org](http://www.ppkwgs.org)
- For PPWGS Use: Cash \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Check \$ \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_ Membership # \_\_\_\_\_ Card Y N

# Peak at Ponds

Is published monthly during the summer months and is the official newsletter of the Pikes Peak Koi & Water Garden Society (PPKWGS)

## PPKWGS Board of Directors for 2026

**President:**

Bob Oatman [President@ppwgs.org](mailto:President@ppwgs.org)

**Vice President:**

Cathy Bulf [VicePresident@ppwgs.org](mailto:VicePresident@ppwgs.org)

**Treasurer:**

Brenda Walth [Treasurer@ppwgs.org](mailto:Treasurer@ppwgs.org)

**Secretary:**

tbd [Secretary@ppwgs.org](mailto:Secretary@ppwgs.org)

**Member at Large:**

Allen Burbidge [Memberatlarge@ppwgs.org](mailto:Memberatlarge@ppwgs.org)

Ellen Simco [Memberatlarge@ppwgs.org](mailto:Memberatlarge@ppwgs.org)

Nicholas Simco [Memberatlarge@ppwgs.org](mailto:Memberatlarge@ppwgs.org)

Robin Robbins [Memberatlarge@ppwgs.org](mailto:Memberatlarge@ppwgs.org)

## PPKWGS Coordinators

**Fund Raiser:** Allen Burbidge

**Refreshments:** Robin Robbins

**Membership:** Allen Burbidge

**Door Prizes:** Allen & Linda Burbidge

**Koi Food Buy:** Phil Goulding

**Rehoming Auction:** Cathy Bluff

**Plant Sale:** Bob Oatman

**Koi Auction:** Tim Jardeleza

**Pond Tour:** Allen Burbidge

**Webmaster:** Bob Oatman

**Newsletter Editor** Rachel Lentz

**Social Media Coordinator:** Jonah Macaspac



## Peak at Ponds Submissions

The deadline for contributions to the Newsletter is the **20th day of the month prior** to distribution. Please submit all articles for publication in the newsletter via email to:

[editor@ppwgs.org](mailto:editor@ppwgs.org)

Your contributions are always welcome and encouraged. Editing of your submission may occur as content is reviewed and as space permits.



## From the Editor

Hello, hello, hello! It's summer again, and what a summer it is starting out to be.

In a previous newsletter - August 2025, to be exact - we talked about what to do to keep your koi safe in hot weather. Given the current heat we are experiencing, that wouldn't be a bad article to review. It can be found on the website in the member section.

This month we also included information on how to think about how you might respond if your pond is located in an evacuation zone, or if the current wildfires are negatively impacting the quality of your pond or your fish's health. I sincerely hope that none of us are ever in a situation in which we have to use that information, but better to have a PACE (Primary, Alternate, Contingency, Emergency) plan and not need to ever use it than to need it and not have it.

On a brighter note, it sounds like the koi rehoming auction was quite a success! I wish I could have been there, but it does sound like everyone had a lot of fun and a huge amount of fish found new homes! That is amazing!

I have been really busy with the planning of our new house and greenhouse/koi pond we are building out in Florissant. Because of that, I haven't been able to make any of the club meetings or events this year. I'm really sad about that, but I hope to be able to make it to the July meeting.

Given how serious the current events are, I was really happy to get an email from club member Paul Shannon. He had found some quotes and jokes online to use in the newsletter, and I found this one particularly funny (or is it sadly true and insightful?):

*The most powerful point of suction in the pond occurs at our checking account.*

Keep those coming! Thanks, Paul!

I hope everyone is doing well and is enjoying the summer. I also hope to see you all soon!

-Rachel